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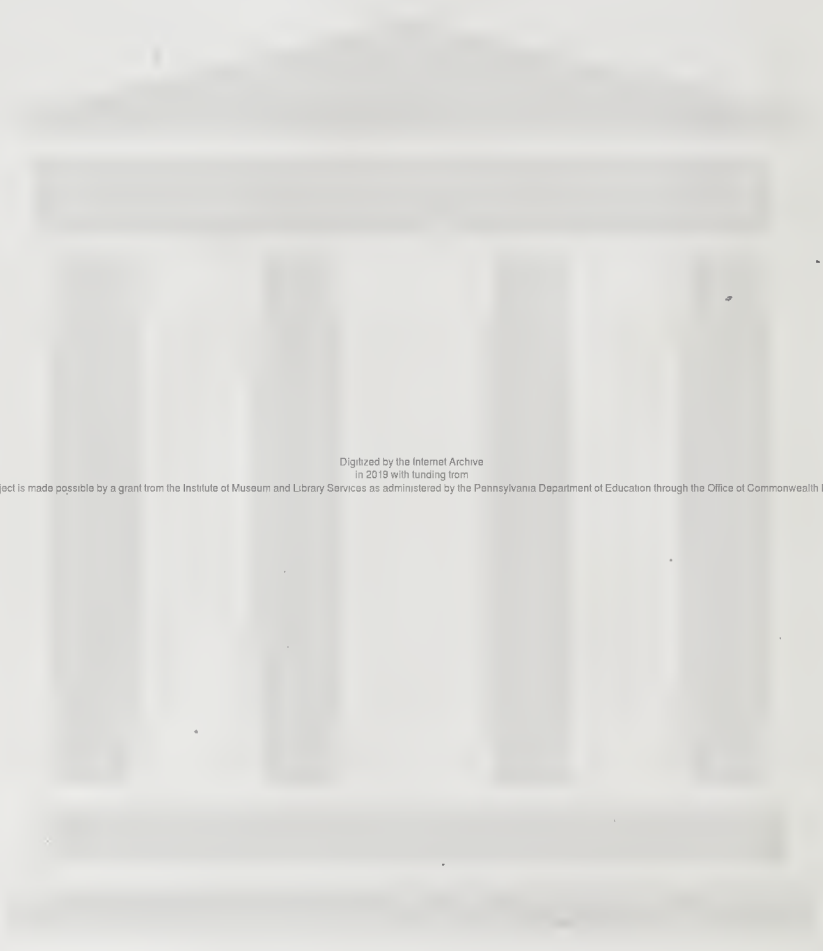
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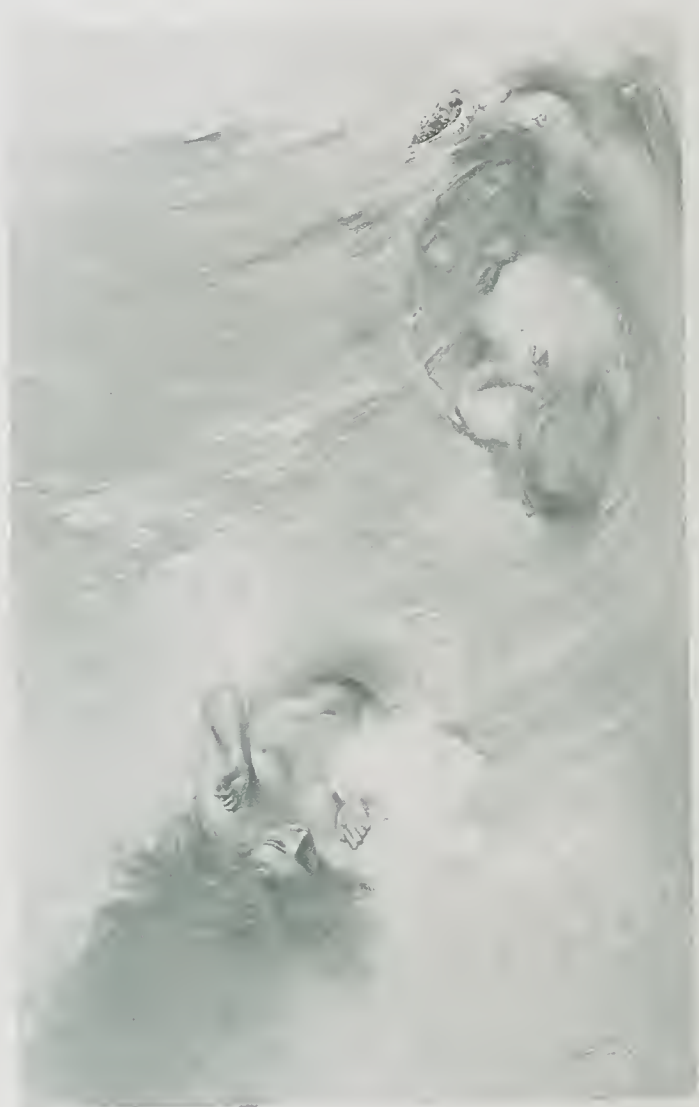
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THE POEMS OF ✿
MADISON CAWEIN

VOLUME IV

POEMS OF MYSTERY AND OF
MYTH AND ROMANCE



THE HISTORY OF
THE
POEMS OF MYSTICISM
AND OF MYTH
ROMANCE

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Page 108
The King

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Around him mermaids sing, foam-clad Page 168
The Sea King

THE POEMS OF
MADISON CAWEIN

Volume IV

POEMS OF MYSTERY
AND OF MYTH AND
ROMANCE

Illustrated

WITH PHOTOGRAVURES AFTER PAINTINGS
BY ERIC PAPE

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TO
MY MOTHER

TO
MY MOTHER

TO
MY MOTHER

59373

CONTENTS

POEMS OF MYSTERY

	PAGE
ASHLY MERE	92
AT DAWN	84
AT MIDNIGHT	118
BEFORE THE TOMB	40
CHANGELING, THE	140
CHILDREN O' THE MOON	177
CITY OF DARKNESS, THE	110
DANCE OF THE FAIRIES, THE	136
ELF-QUEEN, THE	142
ELF SWASHBUCKLER, AN	147
ELIXIR OF LOVE, THE	9
EPILOGUE	218
FAERY MORRIS	163
FLAMENCINE	42
FOREST OF DREAMS, THE	108
GHOSTS	116
GLADIOLES, THE	158
GLAMOUR	161
GLORAMONE	14
GRAMARYE	122
HALL OF DARKNESS, THE	209
HAUNTED	1
HAUNTED ROOM, THE	202
HEADLESS HORSEMAN, THE	94
HILDEGARD	44
IMAGE IN THE GLASS, THE	22
IN AN OLD GARDEN	200

CONTENTS — *Continued*

	PAGE
IN SHADOW	87
IN THE OWL-LIGHT	89
INTIMATIONS	187
KU KLUX	82
LEGEND OF THE STONE, THE	25
LITTLE PEOPLE, THE	165
MERMAID, THE	173
MIRROR, THE	206
MORNING-GLORIES, THE	156
MOTIVE IN GOLD AND GRAY, A	180
NEREID, THE	171
NIXIES, THE	152
OLD HOUSE, THE	106
OLD HOUSE BY THE MERE, THE	197
ON FLOYD'S FORK	33
ON MIDSUMMER NIGHT	132
ON THE EVE OF ST. JOHN	149
PRÆTERITA	85
REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND, A	52
REMBRANDTS	114
REVISITED	104
ROMAUNT OF THE OAK	47
RUINED MILL, THE	29
SEA-KING, THE	168
SEA SPIRIT, THE	98
SELF AND SOUL	194
SONG OF THE ELF	145
STREET OF GHOSTS, A	37
THAT HOUR	216
THAT NIGHT	119
THE MOTH, THE ROSE, AND THE PINK	160
THERE ARE FAIRIES	129
TIGER-LILY, THE	159
UNDER DARK SKIES	112
VAMPIRE, THE	100

CONTENTS — *Continued*

	PAGE
WATER-FAIRY, THE	154
WEREWOLF, THE	96
WHAT DREAMS MAY COME	214
WILL-O'-THE-WISP	102
WOMAN BY THE WATER, THE	35
WOMAN'S PORTION	78
WORLD OF FAERY, THE	125
POEMS OF MYTH AND ROMANCE	
APHRODITE	248
APOLLO	269
ARTEMIS	244
BEFORE THE TEMPLE	240
BEAUTY AND ART	313
DEMETER	253
DIONYSIA	278
DIONYSOS	256
DITHYRAMBICS	289
DOLCE FAR NIENTE	334
DREAM OF RODERICK, THE	350
FAUN, THE	267
FIELD AND FOREST CALL	328
FOREST IDYLL, A	364
GARGAPHIE	264
GENIUS LOCI	286
GLOW-WORM, THE	360
HARVEST MOON, THE	326
HYMN TO DESIRE	295
JOTUNHEIM	273
LAND OF ILLUSION, THE	340
LAST SONG, THE	347
LETHE	233
LIMNAD, THE	237
MEMORY, A	332
MYTH AND ROMANCE	227

CONTENTS — *Continued*

	PAGE
NALAD, THE	235
NYMPH AND FAUN	299
OLD HOMES	330
OLD WATER-MILL, THE	315
PAGAN	311
PAPHIAN VENUS, THE	260
PARTING OF LEANDER AND HERO	301
PERSEPHONE	250
PROCESSIONAL	372
PROEM	225
PURPLE VALLEYS, THE	338
RAIN-CROW, THE	323
REVERIE	230
RUE-ANEMONE, THE	242
SPIRIT OF DREAMS	370
SPIRIT OF THE FOREST SPRING, THE	305
TO A PANSY-VIOLET	307
UNDER THE ROSE	367
VINE AND SYCAMORE	283
ZYPS OF ZIRL	355

SONG AND STORY

AT THE SIGN OF THE SKULL	416
AT VESPERS	438
CUP OF JOY, THE	423
DUM VIVIMUS	418
END OF ALL, THE	429
END OF THE CENTURY, THE	405
FAILURE	420
HIEROGLYPHS	391
INDIAN LEGEND, AN	383
ISLE OF VOICES, THE	410
JOHN DAVIS, BOUCANIER	385
LA JEUNESSE ET LA MORT	426
LEGEND OF A LILY, A	401

CONTENTS—*Continued*

	PAGE
LOVE AND LOSS	428
ROSE O' THE HILLS, A	431
SONG AND STORY	379
STUDY IN GRAY, A	435
TO HARRISON S. MORRIS	377
VOYAGERS	389
WATCHER, THE	415
WHITE VIGIL, THE	433

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

AROUND HIM MERMAIDS SING	
FOAM-CLAD (See page 168)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	PAGE
STARED AND WHISPERED AND SMILED AND WEPT	
(See page 49)	124
THAT REED-SLENDER GIRL WHOM PAN PURSUED .	242

PROEM

*Not while I live may I forget
That garden which my spirit trod!
Where dreams were flowers, wild and wet,
And beautiful as God.*

*Not while I breathe, awake, adream,
Shall live again for me those hours,
When, in its mystery and gleam,
I met her 'mid the flowers.*

*Eyes, talismanic heliotrope,
Beneath mesmeric lashes, where
The sorceries of love and hope
Had made a shining lair.*

*And daydawn brows, wherever hung
The twilight of dark lo'rs; wild birds,
Her lips, that spoke the rose's tongue
In fragrance-voweled words.*

PROEM

*I will not speak of cheeks and chin,
That held me as sweet language holds;
Nor of the eloquence within
Her breasts' twin-moonéd molds.*

*Nor of her body's languorous
Wind-grace, that glanced like starlight
through
Her clinging robe's diaphanous
Web of the mist and dew.*

*There is no star so pure and high
As was her look; no fragrance such
As her soft presence; and no sigh
Of music like her touch.*

*Not while I live may I forget
That garden of dim dreams, where I
And Song within the spirit met,
Sweet Song, who passed me by.*

POEMS OF MYSTERY

HAUNTED

I

Without a moon when night comes on
There is a sighing in its trees
As of sad lips that no one sees ;
And the far-dwindling forest, large
Beyond fenced fields, seems shadowy drawn
Into its shadows. Faint and wan,
By the wistariaed portico
Stealing, I go
Through gardens where the weeds are rank :
Where, here and there, in clump and bank,
Spiræas rise, whose dotted blooms
Seem clustered starlight ; and the four
Syringas sweet heap, powdered o'er,
Thin flower-beakers of perfumes ;
And the dead flowering-almond tree,
That once was pink as her young cheek,
Now withered leans within the glooms.—
Why must I walk here? seek and seek
Her, long since gone? — Still bower on bower
The roses climb in blushing flower.—

HAUNTED

Ah, 'mid the roses could I see
Her eyes, her sad eyes, shine like flowers,
Or like the dew that lies for hours
Within their hearts, then it might be
I might find comfort here, although
Wistful, as if reproaching me,
Her sad eyes look, saying what none may
 know.

II

When midnight comes it brings a moon:
A scent is strewn
Of honey and wild-thorns broadcast
Beneath the stars. When I have passed
Under dark cedars, solemn pines,
Through dodder-drowned petunias,
Corn-flower and the columbine,
To where azaleas, choked with grass,
And peonies, like great wisps, shine,
I reach banked honeysuckle vines,
Piled deep and trammeled with the gourd
And morning-glory — one wild hoard
Of rich aroma — where the seat,
The rustic bench, where oft we sat,—
Now warped and old with rain and heat,—
Still stands upon its mossy mat:

HAUNTED

And here I rest ; and then — a word
I seem to hear ;
A soft word whispered in my ear ;
Her voice it seems ; no thing is near ;
I look around :— I have but heard
The plaintive note of some lost bird
Trickle through night,— awakened where,
'Neath its thick lair of twisted twigs,
The jarring and incessant grigs
Hum :— dream-drugged so, the haunted air
Makes all my soul as heavy as
Dew-poppied grass.

III

Once when the moon rose, fair and full,—
Like some sea-seen Hesperian pool,
A splash of gold through tangling trees,—
Or like the Island beautiful
Of Avalon in haunted seas,—
There came a sighing in the trees
As of sad lips ; there was no breeze,
And yet sad sighings shook the trees.
And when, all in a mystic space,
Her orb swam, amiable white,
Right in that shattered casement, by
The broken porch the creepers lace,

HAUNTED

Born of a moonbeam and a sigh,
I saw *her* face,
Pale through a mist of tears; so slight,
So immaterial, ah me!
In pensiveness, and vanished grace,
'T was like an olden melody.

IV

I know long-angled on its floors,
Where windows face the anxious east,
The moonshine pours
White squares of glitter and, at least,
Gives glimmer to its whispering halls:
Its corridors,
Sleep-tapestried, are guled with bars
Of moonlight: by its wasted walls
Crouch shadows: and,— where streaked dusts
 lay
Their undisturbed, deep gray
Upon its stairs,— dim, vision-footed, glide
Faint gossamer gleams, like visible sighs,
As to and fro, athwart the skies,—
Wind-swung against the moon outside,—
The twisted branches sway
Of one great tree; I stand below,
And listen now,

HAUNTED

Hearing a murmur come and go
Through its gnarled boughs; remembering
how

Shady this chestnut made her room,
And sweet, in June, with plumes of bloom;
And how the broad and gusty flues
Of the old house sang when the rain let loose
Its winds, and each flue seemed a hoarse,
Sonorous throat, filled with the storm's wild
boom,

And growled carousal; goblin tunes
The hylas pipe to rainy moons
Of March; or, in the afternoons
Of summer, singing in their course,—
Where blossoms drip,—all wet of back,—
The crickets drone in avenues
Of locusts leading to the gate.
And in the dark here where I wait
Meseems I hear the silence creep
And crepitate
From hall to hall; as one in sleep
I hear, yet hear not; feel that there
Her soul walks, waking on each stair
Strange echoes; and the stealthy crack
Of old and warping floors: I seem
To follow her; and in a dream
To see, yet see not; in the black

HAUNTED

That drapes each room, my mind informs
With shapes, that hide behind each door
And fling from closets phantom arms.

V

I see her face, as once before,
Bewildered with its terror, pressed
To the dark, polished floor; distressed,
Clasped in her blind and covering hands;
So desolate with anguish, wrenched
With wild remorse, no man could see,
Could see and turn away like me,
No man that sees and understands
Love and its mortal agony.
Again, like some automaton,
Part of that ghostly tragedy,
Myself I see, the fool who fled,
Who sneered and fled. And then again
Came stealing back. Again, with blenched
And bending face I stand, and clenched
And icy hands, and staring eyes,
Looking upon her face, as wan
As water; eyes all wide with pain;
Cramped to dilation, packed with loss:
Again I seem to lean across
The years, and hear my heart's deep groan

HAUNTED

Above the young gold of her head,
Above that huddled heap alone,—
Her, white and dead.

VI

Yes, there is moan
Of lamentation and hushed screams
In all its crannies; and sad shades
Haunt all its rooms, the moonlight braids,
With melancholy. Slow have flown
The weary years: and I have known
An anguish and remorse far worse
Than usual life's; and live, it seems,
Because to live is but a curse. . . .

VII

There she lies buried; there! that ground
Gated with rusty iron, where
She and her stanch forefathers sleep;
So old, the turf scarce shows a mound;
So gray, you scarce distinguish there
A headstone where the ivies creep
And myrtles bloom. A wall of stone
Squares it around; a place for dreams;
A mossy spot of sorrow;—lone,
Nay, lonelier, wilder now it seems,

HAUNTED

Though just the same : its roses waste
Their petals there as oft of yore ;
Their placid petals, as before ;
Pale, pensive petals : yonder some
Lie faint as puffs of foam
Within the moonlight, dimly traced
Beneath the boughs ; some few are strown
On the usurping weeds, great grown
Around her tomb, on which two dead leaves
lie. . . .

Here let my sick heart break and die
Amid their wiltings, on her grave,
Here in her dim, old burying-ground
The druid cedars guard around
And roses and wild thorns. Alone
She shall not lie ! Ah, let me moan
My life out here where rose-leaves fall,
And rest by her who was my all !

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

He held it possible that he
Who idolizes one that 's dead,
With that strange liquid instantly
Might raise them, living red:
And so he thought, "'T is mine at last
To live and love the love that 's past;
The joy without the grief and pain.
The dead shall live and love again."

For he had loved one till for him
Her face had grown his spirit-part:
Though dead, she seemed to him less dim
Than men in street and mart.
He labored on; for, truth to say,
In toil alone his pleasure lay,
His art, through which, sometime, he thought,
Back to his arms she would be brought.

He kept such trysts as phantoms keep,
Pale distances about his soul;
And moved like one who walks asleep,
Attaining no sure goal:

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

Yet blither than a younger heart
At crucible and glass retort
He labored; for his love was prism
To irisate toil's egoism.

He drained wan draughts from out a cup,
A globe of vague and flaming gold,
Held from the darkness, brimming up,
By something white and cold,
That wreathed faint fingers round its brim,
Slim flakes of foam; and, soft and dim,
Stooped out of fiery-bound abysses
To print his brow with icy kisses.

At last within his trembling hand
An ancient flask burnt, starry rose;
A liquid flame of ruby fanned,
Heart-like, with crimson throes:
And in the liquid, like a flower,
A starlike face bloomed for an hour,
Then slowly faded to a skull
With eyes that mocked the beautiful.

'Though all his life had been so strange,
Yet stranger now it seemed to be;—
What was it led him forth to range
'Mid graves and mystery?

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

What led him to that one dim tomb,
Where he could read within the gloom
The name of one who lay within
With all of silence, naught of sin?

Untainted, so it seemed, and made
By death's cold kisses still more fair,
He found her; raised her; softly laid
Her raven depths of hair
Upon his shoulder: and the pearls,
Around her neck and in her curls,
Less pale were than the kingly calm
Upon his face that showed no qualm.

And through the night, beneath the moon,
Across the windy hill, the gloom
Of forests where the leaves lay strewn,
He brought her to his room:
And in the awfulness of death,
That filled her wide eyes with its breath,
He set her in a carven chair
Where the still moon could kiss her hair.

One moment then he paused to think:
Then to her lips, all drawn and dead,
His strange elixir pressed and —“ Drink!
Drink life and love!” he said.

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

And it — it drank; the dead drank slow:
And in its eyes there came a glow:
Yet still as stone its body sate,
With eyes of hell and lips of hate.

Still as fall-frozen ice its face,
And thin its voice as drizzled rain,
When in its rotting silk and lace
It rose and lived again:
Its bosom moved not while it spake;
Nor moved its lips; and half awake
Its eyes seemed with enchanted sleep
A century long in night's old keep.

And, stooping o'er, it whispered low —
A sound like a vibrating wire,
Or like the hiss of falling snow
In flutterings faint of fire:—
“In me, behold, you see your toil!
In me your love! A thing to coil
Around your life thus! — Make entire! —
The demon of your dead desire!”

And where, before, was quietness,
Was violence of hate and evil —
Yet all its form seemed passionless,
A corpse that held a devil!

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

But who shall say the hands were its
That made within his throat these pits?—
They found him dead; and by him, one
Who clasped him close, a skeleton.

GLORAMONE

The moonbeams on the hollies glow
Pale where she left me; and the snow
Lies bleak in moonshine on the graves,
Ribbed with each gust that shakes and waves
Ancestral cedars by her tomb. . . .

She lay so beautiful in death,
My Gloramone,— whose loveliness
Death had not dimmed with all its doom,—
That, urged by my divine distress,
I sought her sepulchre: the gloom,
The iciness that takes the breath,
The sense of fear, were not too strong
To keep me from beholding long.

I stole into its sorrow; burst,
With what I know was hand accursed,
Its seal, the gated silence of
Her old armorial tomb: but love
Had sighed sweet romance to my heart;
And here, I thought, another part

GLORAMCNE

Our souls would play. I did not start
When indistinctness of pale lips
Breathed on my hair; faint finger-tips
Fluttered their starlight on my brow;
When on my eyes, I knew not whence,
Vague kisses fell: then, like a vow,
Within my heart, an aching sense
Of vampire winning. And I heard
Her name slow-syllabled — a word
Of haunting harmony — and then
Low-whispered, "Thou! at last, 't is thou!"
And sighs of shadowy lips again.

How madly strange that this should be!
For, had she loved me here on Earth,
It had not then been marvelous
That she should now remember me,
Returning love for love, though worth
Less, yes, far less to both of us.
And so I wondered, listening there:
How was it that her soul was brought
So near to mine now, whom in life
She hated so? And everywhere
About my life I thought and thought
And found no reason why her love
Should now be mine. We were at strife
Forever here; her hatred drove

GLODRAMONE

Me to despair: I cast my glove
Into the frowning face of fate,
And lost her. Yea, it was her hate
That made her Appolonio's wife.
Her hate! her lovely hate! — for of
Her naught I found unlovely; — and
I felt she did not understand
My passion, and 't were well to wait.

And now I felt her presence near,
I, full of life; yet knew no fear
There in the sombre silence, mark.
And it was dark, yes, deadly dark:
But when I slowly drew away
The pall, death modeled with her face,—
From her fair form it fell and lay
Rich in the dust,—the shrouded place
Was glittering daggered by the spark
Of one wild ruby at her throat,
Red-arrowed as a star with throbs
Of pulsing flame. And note on note
The night seemed filled with tenuous sobs
Of fire that flickered from that stone,
That, lustrous, lay against her throat,
Large as her eyes, and shadowy.
And standing by the dead alone
I marveled not that this should be.

GLORAMONE

The essence of an hundred stars,
Of fretful crimson, through and through
Its bezels beat, when, bending down
My hot lips pressed her mouth. And scars,
Aurora-scarlet, veiny blue,
Flame-hearted, blurred the midnight; and
The vault rang; and I felt a hand
Like fire in mine. And, lo, a frown
Broke up her face as gently as
The surface of a fountain's glass
A zephyr moves, that jolts the grass
Spilling its rain-drops. When this passed,
Through song-soft slumber, binding fast,
Slow smiles dreamed outward beautiful;
And with each smile I heard the dull
Deep music of her heart, and saw,
As by some necromantic law,
Faint tremblings of a lubric light
Flush her white temples and her throat:
And each long pulse was as a note,
That, gathering, like a strong surprise
With all of happiness, made sweet
With dim carnation in wild wise
The arch of her pale lips, and beat
Like moonlight from her head to feet.
I bent and kissed her once again:
And with that kiss it seemed that pain,

GLORAMONE

Which long had ached beneath her smile
And eyelids, vanished. In a while
I saw she breathed. Then, wondrous white,
Fair as she was before she died,
She rose upon the bier; a sight
To marvel at, whose truth belied
All fiction. Yet I saw her eyes
Grow wide unto my kiss,—like skies
Of starless dawn.—And all the fire
Of that dark ruby at her throat
Around her presence seemed to float,
A mist of rose, wherein like light
She moved, or music exquisite.

What followed then I scarcely know:
All I remember is, I caught
Her hand; and from the tomb I brought
Her beautiful: and o'er the snow,
Where moonbeams on the hollies glow,
I led her. But her feet no print
Left of their nakedness, no dint,
No faintest trace in frost. I thought,
“The moonlight fills them with its glow,
So soft they fall; or 'tis the snow
Covers them o'er!—the tomb was black,
And—this strong light blinds!”—Turning
back

GLORAMONE

My eyes met hers ; and as I turned,
Flashing centupled facets, burned
That ruby at her throat ; and I
Studied its beauty for a while :
How came it there, and when, and why ?
Who set it at her throat ? Again,
Was it a ruby ? — Pondering,
I stood and gazed. A far, strange smile
Filled all her face, and as with pain
I seemed to hear her speak, or sing,
These words, that meant not anything,
Yet more than any words may mean :
“ Thy blood it is,” she said ; then sighed :
“ See where thy heart’s blood beateth ! here
Thy heart’s blood, that my lips did drain
In life ; I live by still, unseen,
Long as thy passion shall remain.—
Canst thou behold and have no fear ? —
Yea, if I am not dead, ’t is thou ! —
Look how thy heart’s blood flashes now !—
Blood of my life and soul, beat on !
Beat on ! and fill my veins with dawn ;
And heat the heart of me, his bride ! ”
And then she leaned against me, eyed
Like some white serpent, strangely still,
That binds one with its glittering stare,

GLORAMONE

That at wild stars hath gazed until
Its eyes have learned their golden glare.

And then I took her by the wrists
And drew her to me. Faintly felt
The shadow of her hair, whose mists
Were twilight-deep and dimly smelt
Of shroud and sepulchre. And she
Smiled on me with such sorcery
As well might win a soul from God
To Hell and torments. And I trod
On white enchantments and was long
A song and harp-string to a song,
Love's battle in my blood. And there,
Kissing her mouth, all unaware
The ruby loosened at her throat,
And, ere I wist, hung o'er my hand,
And on the brink I seemed to stand
Of something that cried out, "Admire
The beauty of this gem of fire,
Its witchcraft and its workmanship."
Then from her throat it seemed to slip,
And, in the hollow of my hand,
A rosy spasm, a bubble-boat
Of living flame, it seemed to float;
A fretful fire; a heart, fierce fanned
Of red convulsions. Like a brand,

GLORAMONE

A blaze, it touched me; seemed to run
Like fever through my pulses, swift,
Of torrid poison. One by one,
Now burning ice, now freezing sun,
I felt my veins swell. Then I felt
My palm brim up and overflow
With blood that, beads of oozing glow,
Dripped, drop by drop, upon the snow,
Like holly-berries on the snow.

Then something darkly seemed to melt
Within me, and I heard a sigh
So like a moan, 't was as if years
Of anguish bore it; and the sky
Swam near me as when seen through tears —
And she was gone. . . . In ghostly gloom
Of dark, scarred pines a crumbling tomb
Loomed like a mist. Carved in its stone,
Above the grated portal deep,
Glimmered this legend:—

“Let her sleep,
Crowned with dim death, our lovely one,
Known here on Earth as Gloramone.
Our hearts bow down by her and weep,
And one sits weeping all alone.”

THE IMAGE IN THE GLASS

I

The slow reflection of a woman's face
Grew, as by witchcraft, in the oval space
Of that strange glass on which the moon looked
in:—

As cruel as death beneath the auburn hair
The dark eyes burned; and, o'er the faultless
chin,—

Evil as night, yet as the daybreak fair,—
Rose-red and sensual smiled the mouth of sin.

II

The glorious throat and shoulders and, twin
crests

Of snow, the splendid beauty of the breasts,
Filled soul and body with the old desire.—
Daughter of darkness! how could this thing be?
You, whom I loathed! for whom my heart's
fierce fire

Had burnt to ashes of satiety!
You, who had sunk my soul in crime's red
mire!

THE IMAGE IN THE GLASS

III

How came your image there? and in that room!
Where she, the all-adored, my life's sweet
bloom,

Died poisoned! She, my scarcely one week's
bride —

Yes, poisoned by a gift you sent to her,
Thinking her death would win me to your side.
It won me; yes! but. . . Well, it made
some stir —

By your own hand, I think, they said you died.

IV

Time passed. And then — was it the curse of
crime,

That night of nights, which forced my feet to
climb

To that locked bridal-room? — 'Twas midnight
when

A longing, like to madness, mastered me,
Compelled me to that chamber, which for ten
Long years was sealed: a dark necessity
To gaze upon — I knew not what again.

THE IMAGE IN THE GLASS

V

Love's ghost, perhaps. Or, in the curvature
Of that orb'd mirror, something that might cure
The ache in me — some message, said perchance
Of her dead loveliness,— which once it
 glassed,—
That might repeat again my lost romance
In momentary pictures of the past,
While in its depths her image swam in trance.

VI

I did not dream to see the soulless eyes
Of *you* I hated; nor the lips where lies
And kisses curled: *your* features,— that were
 tuned
To all demonic,— smiling up as might
Some deep damnation! while . . . my God!
 I swooned! . . .
Oozed slowly out, between the breasts' dead
 white,
The ghastly red of that wide dagger-wound.

THE LEGEND OF THE STONE

The year was dying, and the day
Was almost dead;
The west, beneath a sombre gray,
Was sombre red:
The gravestones in the ghostly light,
That glimmered there,
Seemed phantoms, wandering wan and white,
'Mid trees half bare.

I stood beside the grave of one
Who, here in life,
Was false to me; who had undone
My child and wife:
I stood beside his grave until
The moon came up —
It seemed the dark, unhallowed hill
Lifted a cup.

No stone was there to mark his grave,
No flower to grace —
'T was meet that weeds alone should wave
In such a place:

THE LEGEND OF THE STONE

I stood beside his grave until
The stars swam high,
And all the night was iron-still
From sky to sky.

What cared I though strange eyes glowed
bright
Within the gloom!
Though, evil blue, a witch's-light
Burnt by each tomb!
Or that each crooked thorn-tree seemed
A hag, black-cloaked!
Or that the owl above me screamed,
The raven croaked!

I cursed him: cursed him when the day
Burnt sullen red;
Had cursed him when the west was gray,
And day was dead:
And now when night made dark the pole,
Both soon and late
I cursed his body, yea, and soul,
With th' hate of hate.

Once at my side I seemed to hear
A low voice say,—
“'T were better to forgive,—and fear
Thy God,—and pray.”

THE LEGEND OF THE STONE

I laughed; and from pale lips of stone
On sculptured tombs
Wild laughter leapt, and then a moan
Swept through the glooms.

And then I felt a change — a force,
That seemed to seize
My body, like some fearful curse,
And, fastening, freeze
It downward, deeper than the knees,
Into the earth —
While still among the twisted trees
Rang mocking mirth.

And then I felt such fear, despair,
As lost ones feel,
When, knotted in their pitch-stiff hair,
They feel the steel
Of devils' forks lift up, through sleet
Of Hell's slant fire,
Then plunge,— as white from head to feet
I grew entire.

A voice without me, yet within,
As still as frost,
Intoned: "Thy sin is more than sin,
O damned and lost!

THE LEGEND OF THE STONE

Behold, how God would punish thee
For this thy crime —
Thy crime of hate and blasphemy —
Through endless time!

“O’er him, whom thou wouldst not forgive,
Record what good
He did on Earth! and let him live
Loved, understood!
Be memory thine of all the worst
He did thine own!” . . .
There at the head of him I cursed
I stood — a stone.

THE RUINED MILL

On the wild South Fork of Harrod's Creek,
O'ergrown with creepers, if you should seek,
You will find an ancient water-mill
Of stone below a wooded hill.
Its weedy wheel is not less still
Than its image that sleeps in the grassy pool
Where the moccasin swims; and, slimly cool
Like streaks of light through blurs of sun,
The silver minnows and crawfish run.
So lone the place, in its sycamore
The blue crane builds; and from the shore
The shitepoke wanders about its door.
The burdock sprawls on its sill of pine;
And, in its pathway, eglantine
And blackberry tangle and intertwine;
Ox-daisies checker with pearl and gold
The bushy banks of its mill-race old;
The owl in its loft as safely lairs
As the fox in its cellar, that whelps and cares
Naught for the hunters who gallop by
With their baying hounds; the martins fly

THE RUINED MILL

Around its chimney and build therein;
And wasp and hornet, with murmurous din,
Plaster their nests, that none disturb,
On window-lintel and hopper-curb.

Once I stood in this old, stone mill,
Once as the day died over the hill,
And night came on; and stark and still
I met with phantoms upon its stairs;
Shadows, that took me unawares,
Eyed with fire and cowed with gloom —
Twilight phantoms, that crowded, dark,
Its dim interior, each eye a spark
Of sunset, creviced, within the room —
While a moist, chill, moldering, dead perfume
Of crumbling timbers and rotting grain,
On floors all warped with the sun and rain,
Made of the stagnant air a cell,
Round the cobwebbed rafters hung like a
spell;
Making my mind, despite me, run
On thoughts of a hidden skeleton,
There in the walls; or, dripping dank,
Under the floor, 'neath a certain plank;
Glowing, grim in the mossy wet,
In its hollow eyes a dark regret.

THE RUINED MILL

I had entered when the evening-star
In the saffron heaven was sparkling afar,
In all its glory of light divine,
Like a diamond drowned in kingly wine;
And I stayed till the heavens hung low and
 gray,
And the clouds of the storm drove down and
 away,
Like the tattered leaves of an Autumn day;
And the wild rain beat on the rotting roof
The goblin dance of the Fiend's own hoof,
Till the spider dropped from its dusty woof;
And the thunder throbbed like a mighty heart;
And the wild wind filled each crannied part
Of the mill with moanings, that seemed to be
The voice of an ancient agony —
Till the beetle shrunk in its board of pine;—
While the lightning lit with its instant shine
The tossing terror of tree and vine. . . .
Then, all on a sudden, the storm was still—
And I saw *her* there, near the shattered sill,
At the window, gazing from the mill
Into the darkness under the storm;
Around her flickering hair and form
Unearthly glimmer. She seemed to lean
To the rushing waters that roared unseen:
A moment only she seemed to sway

THE RUINED MILL

Before me there in the lightning gray,
Then vanished utterly away :
Like a blown-out light. . . .

And was it she,
The miller's daughter who died, they say,
Who flung herself on the mill's great wheel,
Long years ago, in her heart's despair? —
Or was it a dream, a fantasy,
That the place and the moment made me feel,
And imagination imaged there?

ON FLOYD'S FORK

When the hoot of the owl comes over the hill,
At twelve o'clock when the night is still,
And pale on the pool where the creek-frogs
croon,

Glimmering gray is the light o' the moon;
And under the willows, where shadows lie,
The torch of the firefly wanders by;—
They say that the miller walks here, walks here,
All covered with chaff, with his crooked staff,
And his horrible hobble and hideous laugh;
The old, lame miller hung many a year:
When the hoot of the owl comes over the hill,
He walks in the night by Harrod's mill.

When the bark of the fox sounds lone on the
hill,

At twelve o'clock when the night is chill
With the autumn wind, and the waters creep
Where the starlight fails and the shadows sleep;
And under the willows, that toss and moan,
The glow-worm kindles its lanthorn lone;—

ON FLOYD'S FORK

They say that a woman floats dead, floats dead,
In a weedy space that the lilies lace,
A curse in her eyes and a smile on her face;
The miller's young wife with a gash in her
head:

When the bark of the fox sounds lone on the hill,
She floats in the night by Harrod's mill.

When the howl of the hound comes over the
hill,

At twelve o'clock when the night is ill,
And the thunder mutters and rain-winds sob,
And the foxfire glows like the lamp of a Lob;
And under the willows, that gloom and glance,
The will-o'-the-wisps hold a devil's-dance; —
They say that that crime is reacted again.
And each cranny and chink of the mill doth
wink

With the light o' hell, or the lightning's blink,
And a woman's shrieks are heard through the
rain:

When the howl of the hound comes over the
hill,

No man will walk by Harrod's mill.

THE WOMAN BY THE WATER

She stands within the stormy glow
Of sunset, with a face of snow,
The white embodiment of woe,
As night comes on :

She stands within the sombre glare
Of dusk, with dark neglected hair,
An apparition of despair,
When day is gone.

The haggard house within the vale
Looks spectral as a ragged sail
The Dutchman hoists against the gale
On haunted seas :

And in the garden,—one vast brake
Of dock and thistle,—snail and snake
Crawl ; and the death-watch taps, awake
In rotting trees.

THE WOMAN BY THE WATER

The stagnant stream along the night
Creeps, like a nightmare, where each white
Lily is an uneasy light,
A wisp up-tossed:

And through the cypress-trees and vines
The gray fox skulks and laps and whines;
The owl hoots; and the foxfire shines
In darkness lost.

She stands beside the stagnant stream;
Her garments drip at every seam;
She looks a shadow in a dream
Of dread and woe:

No star stares half so steadily
At earth as at the water she;
And what she sees there — it may be
The owlets know.

A STREET OF GHOSTS

The drowsy day, with half-closed eyes,
Dreams in this quaint forgotten street,
That, like some old-world wreckage lies,—
Left by the sea's receding beat,—
Far from the city's restless feet.

Abandoned pavements, that the trees'
Huge roots have wrecked; whose flagstones
 feel

No more the sweep of draperies;
And sunken curbs, whereon no wheel
Grinds, and no gallant's spur-bound heel.

Old houses, walled with rotting brick,
Thick-creepered, dormered, weather-vaned,—
Like withered faces, sad and sick,—
Stare from each side, all broken paned,
With battered doors the rain has stained.

And though the day be white with heat,
Their ancient yards are dim and cold;

A STREET OF GHOSTS

Where now the toad makes its retreat,
'Mid flower-pots green-caked with mold,
And naught but noisome weeds unfold.

The slow gray slug and snail have trailed
Their slimy silver up and down
The beds where once the moss-rose veiled
Rich beauty; and the mushroom brown
Swells where the lily tossed its crown.

The shadowy scents, that oft are wont
To flit among the walks and boughs,
Seem ghosts of sweethearts here who haunt
And wander round each empty house,
Wrapped in the fragrance of dead vows.

And, haply, when the evening droops
Her amber eyelids in the west,
Here you may hear the swish of hoops,
Or catch the glint of hat and vest,
As two dim lovers past you pressed.

And, instant as some star's slant flame,
That scores the swarthy cheek of night,
Perhaps behold Colonial dame
And gentleman in stately white
Go glimmering down the pale moonlight.

A STREET OF GHOSTS

In powder, patch, and furbelow,
Cocked hat and sword; and every one,—
Tory and Whig of long-ago,—
As real as in the days long done,
The courtly days of Washington.

BEFORE THE TOMB

The way led under cedared gloom
Where, o'er the entrance of her tomb,
The moon hung, like a cactus bloom.

I had an hour of night and thin
Sad starlight; and I set my chin
Against the grating and looked in.

A gleam, like moonlight, through a square
Of opening — I knew not where —
Shone on her coffin resting there.

And on its oval silver-plate
I read her name and age and date,
And smiled, soft-thinking on my hate.

There was no insect sound to chirr;
No wind to make a little stir:
I stood and looked and thought on her.

BEFORE THE TOMB

The gleam stole downward from her head,
Till at her feet it rested, red
On Gothic gold, whose letters said:—

“God to her love lent a weak reed
Of strength: and gave no light to lead:
Pray for her soul: for it hath need.”

There was no night-bird's twitter near;
No low, vague water I might hear
To make a small sound in the ear.

The gleam, that made a burning mark
Of each dim word, died to a spark;
Then left the tomb and coffin dark.

I had a little while to wait;
And prayed with hands against the grate,
And heart that yearned and knew too late.

There was no light below, above,
To point my soul the way thereof,—
The way of hate that led to love.

FLAMENCINE

I

It was a gipsy maiden
 Within the forest green ;
It was a gipsy maiden
 Who shook a tambourine :
The star of eve had not the face,
The cascade's foam had not the grace
 Of Flamencine.

II

Her bodice was of purple,
 Her shoes of satin sheen ;
Her bodice was of purple
 With scarlet laid between :
The wind of eve was in the tread,
The black of night was on the head
 Of Flamencine.

FLAMENCINE

III

Among the dreaming vistas,
The darkling dells between,
Among the dreaming vistas
I heard her tambourine:
And far within the ghostly glade
The moonbeams and the shadows played
Round Flamencine.

IV

Among the beechen shadows
When fireflies are seen,
Among the beechen shadows
When glow-worms glimmer green,
Then down the darkness, like a light,
She dances; and the eyes are bright
Of Flamencine.

V

There lies a gipsy maiden
Within the forest green;
There lies a gipsy maiden
Beside her tambourine:
These many years I am her slave —
The violets grow upon the grave
Of Flamencine.

HILDEGARD

I

Hildegard the dæmons name
Her, who meets me on the mountain:
Her, whose hair is like the flame
Of a sunset-fevered fountain:
I can tell her by her eyes,
Dreadful eyes of bitter beryl,
Where the anguish never dies,
And the suffering soul sits sterile
In such light as ever lies
On the unsailed seas of peril.

II

How we met I never knew.
Once I turned — and there she trembled
Near me, glimmering like the dew
In the sessions of assembled
Flowers.— Hers some influence
Of soft, serpent magnetism,

HILDEGARD

Vanquishing my every sense
With essential mesmerism;
Holding me beneath the lens
Of her will's compelling prism.

III

I can not escape. She treads
Noiseless as the forest flowers
Walked on by the wind; their heads
Pavements for the mottled hours:
She is whiter than the trees
When their blossoms are unsheathing;
She is lissome as the ease
Of the liliated water wreathing;
She is subtle as the breeze
Through the summer foliage breathing.

IV

When she speaks, within my ears,
Like wild music heard in fever
Is her voice; and it appears
That my soul can never leave her:
Babylonian necromance,
Oldest witcheries,— that harrow
Yet compel,— are hers; her glance
Holds me; and my very marrow

HILDEGARD

Feels it; and I stand a-trance,
While her pupils slowly narrow.

V

Thus she binds me with her gaze,
While her white hands weigh my shoulders;
And my weak will swings and sways
To her gaze that burns and smolders.
So she draws me far away,
Under boughs where summer dallies:
Over peaks of purple day:
Far away through Eden alleys:
All the way is one long May
Till we come to her dark valleys.

VI

There black tempest treads the peaks;
Iron skies are gulfed asunder,
Whence the lightning's lava leaks,
Vomiting the hosts of thunder.
Here she kisses me till red
With my heart's blood are her kisses;
Then my soul is seized with dread,
For it knows no woman this is:
Yea, behold! it sees instead
But a milk-white snake that hisses.

ROMAUNT OF THE OAK

“ I rode to death, for I fought for shame —
The Lady Maurine of noble name,

“ The fair and faithless! — Though life be long
Is love the wiser? — Love made song

“ Of all my life ; and the soul that crept
Before, arose like a star and leapt :

“ Still leaps with the love that it found untrue,
That it found unworthy.— Now run me
through!

“ Yea, run me through! for meet and well,
And a jest for laughter of fiends in Hell,

“ It is that I, who have done no wrong,
Should die by the hand of Hugh the Strong,

“ Of Hugh her leman! — What else could be
When the devil was judge 'twixt thee and
me?

ROMAUNT OF THE OAK

“ He splintered my lance, and my blade he
broke —

Now finish me, thou, 'neath the trysting oak ! ”

The shield of his foeman — a heart of white
In a bath of fire — shone in the night :

The plume of his foeman, as midnight black,
Blew, as he leapt on his horse's back :

Leapt and laughed as his sword he swung,
Then galloped away with a laugh on his
tongue. . . .

Who is she in the gray, wet dawn,
'Mid the forest shades like a shadow wan?

Who kneels, one hand on her straining breast,
One hand on the dead man's bosom pressed?

Her face is dim as the dead's ; and cold
As his tarnished harness of steel and gold.

O Lady Maurine ! O Lady Maurine !
What boots it now that regret is keen?

That his hair you smooth ? that you kiss his
brow,

What boots it now ? what boots it now ? —

ROMAUNT OF THE OAK

She has haled him under the trysting oak,
The huge old oak that the creepers cloak.

She has stood him, gaunt in his battered arms,
In its haunted hollow.—“Be safe from
storms,”

She laughed as his cloven casque she placed
On his brow, and his riven shield she braced.

Then sat and talked to the forest flowers
Through the lonely term of the day's pale
hours.

And stared and whispered and smiled and
wept,
As nearer and nearer the evening crept.

And lo, when the moon, like a great gold
bloom
Above the sorrowful trees did loom,

She rose up sobbing, “O moon, come see
My bridegroom here in the old oak-tree!

“I have talked to the flowers all day, all day,
For never a word had he to say.

ROMAUNT OF THE OAK

“He would not listen, he would not hear,
Though I wailed my longing into his ear.

“O moon, steal in where he stands so grim,
And tell him I love him and plead with him.

“Soften his face, that is cold and stern,
And brighten his eyes and make them burn,

“O moon, white moon, so my soul can see,
Can say that they glow with love for me!”—

When the moon had set, and the woods were
dark,

The wild deer came, and stood as stark

As phantoms with eyes of flame; or fled
Like a ghostly herd of the hunted dead.

And the strix-owl called; and the werewolf
snarled;

And a voice, in the boughs of the oak-tree
gnarled,—

Like the whining voice of the hags that ride
To the witches' Sabbath,—crooned and cried.

Stared and whispered and smiled and wept Page 49

Romaunt of the Oak



ROMAUNT OF THE OAK

And wrapped in his mantle of wind and cloud,
The storm-fiend stalked ' through the forest
loud.

When she heard the dead man rattle and groan
As the oak was bent and its leaves were blown,

And the lightning flickered his shimmering
mail,—
Through the swirl and sweep of the rain and
hail,

She seemed to hear him, who seemed to call,—
“Come hither, Maurine! the wild leaves fall!

“The wild leaves rustle, the wild leaves flee —
Come hither, Maurine, to the hollow tree!

“To the trysting tree, to the tree once green,
Come hither, Maurine! come hither, Maurine!” . . .

They found her closed in his armored arms —
Had he claimed his bride on that night of
storms?

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

I

Not for you and me the path
Winding through the shadowless
Fields of morning's dewiness!
Where the brook that hurries hath
Laughter lighter than a boy's;
Where recurrent odors poise,
Romp-like, with irreverent tresses,
In the sun; and leaves and boughs
Build a music-haunted house
For the winds to hang their dresses,
Whisper-silken, rustling in.
Ours a path that led unto
Twilight regions gray with dew;
Where moon-vapors gathered thin
Over acres sisterless
Of all healthy beauty; where
Fungus growths made sad the air
As a phantom-felt caress:
Under darkness and strange stars,
To the sorrow-silenced bars

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

Of a dubious forestland,
Where the wood-scents seemed to stand,
And the sounds on either hand,
Clad like Sleep's own servitors
In the shadowy livery
Of the ancient House of Dreams,
Which before us,—fitfully,
With white intermittent gleams
Of its pale-lamped windows,—shone,
Echoing with the dim unknown.

II

To say to Hope,—Take all from me,
And grant me naught:
Take rose, and song, and melody,
And word and thought:
Then all my life make me her slave,—
Is all I crave.

To say to Time,—Be true to me,
Nor grant me less
Of loss, of grief, of memory,
Of heart's distress:
Then for her love set me a task,
Is all I ask.

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

III

I came to you when eve was young:
And, where the park rolled downward to
The river, and among the dew,
One vesper moment, lit and sung
A bird, your eyes said something true,
Said something to my eyes, more dear
Than song the bird poured, silver-clear.
How sweet it was to be with you!
How, with our souls, we seemed to hear
The night approaching with its stars!
How calm the moon sloped up her sphere
Of fire-filled pearl through passive bars
Of clouds that berged the tender east!
While all the dark inanimate
Of Nature woke; initiate
With th' moon's arrival, something ceased
In Nature's soul: she stood again
Another self, that seemed t' have been
Dormant, suppressed and so unseen
All day: a life, unknown and strange
And dream-suggestive, that had lain,—
Masked on with light,—within the range
Of thought, but unrevealed till now.
It was the hour of love. And you,
With downward eyes and pensive brow,

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

Among the moonlight and the dew,—
Although no word of love was spoken,—
Heard the sweet night's confession broken
Of something here more sweet in me:
A love, depth made inaudible,
Save to your soul, that answered well,
With eyes replying silently.

IV

Fair you are as a rose is fair,
There where the shadows dew it;
And the deeps of your brown, brown hair,
Soft as the cloud that lingers there
With the sunset's auburn through it.
Eyes of azure and throat of snow,
Tell me what my heart would know!

Every dream I dream of you
Has a love-thought in it,
And a hope, a kiss or two,
Something dear and something true,
Telling me each minute,
With three words it whispers clear
What my heart from you would hear.

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

V

Junetime came: the days grew kind
With increasing beauty: deep
Were the nights with rest and sleep:
Fair, with poppies intertwined
On their blond locks, went the Hours,
Sunny-hearted as the rose,
Through the buds and banded flowers,
Teaching them, how no one knows,
Freshness, color, and perfume.—
In the window of your room
Bloomed a late azalea. Pink
As an egret's rosy plumes
Shone its tender-tufted blooms.
From your care and love, I think,
Love's rose-color it did drink,
Growing rosier day by day
Through your 'tending hand's caress:
And your own dear naturalness
Had imbued it in some way.
Once you gave a blossom of it,
Smiling, to me when I left:
Need I tell you how I love it
Faded though it is now!—'Reft
Of its fragrance and its color,
Yet 't is dearer now than then,

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

— As past happiness is when
Life regrets.— And dimmer, duller
Though its beauty be, when I
Look upon it, I recall
Every part of that old wall;
And the dingy window high,
Where you sat and read; and all
The fond love that made your face
A soft sunbeam in that place:
And the plant that grew this bloom
Withered here, itself long dead,
Makes a halo overhead
There again — and through my room,
Like faint whispers of perfume,
Steal the words of love then said.

VI

All of my love I send to you,
I send to you,
On thoughts, like moths, that wend to you
Out of my heart's glad garden,
O'er which, its lovely warden,
Your face, a lily seeming,
Is dreaming.

All of my life I bring to you,
I bring to you,

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

In deeds, like birds, that wing to you
Out of my soul's deep valley,
O'er which, most musically,
Your love, a fountain, glistens,
And listens.

My love, my life, how blessed in you!
How blessed in you!
Whose thoughts, whose deeds find rest in you
Here on my life's dark ocean,
O'er which, in heavenly motion,
Your soul, a star, abideth,
And guideth.

VII

Where the old Kentucky wound
Through the land,—its stream between
Hills of primitive forest green,—
Like a goodly belt around
Giant breasts of grandeur; with
Many an unknown Indian myth,
On the boat we steamed. The land
Like an hospitable hand
Welcomed us. Alone we sat
On the under-deck, and saw
Farm-house and plantation draw

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

Near and vanish. 'Neath your hat
Your young eyes laughed; and your hair,
Blown about them by the air
Of our passage, clung and curled.
Music, and the summer moon;
And the hills' great shadows hewn
Out of silence; and the tune
Of the whistle, when we whirled
Round a moonlit bend in sight of
Some lone landing heaped with hay
Or tobacco; where the light of
One dim, solitary lamp
Signaled through the evening's damp:
Then a bell; and, dusky gray,
Shuffling figures on the shore
With the cable; rugged forms
On the gang-plank; backs and arms
With their cargo bending o'er;
And the burly mate before.
Then an iron bell, and puff
Of escaping steam; and out
Where the stream is wheel-whipped rough;
Music, and a parting shout
From the shore; the pilot's bell
Beating on the deck below;
Then the steady, quivering, slow,
Smooth advance again. Until

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

Twinkling lights beyond us tell
Of a lock or little town
Clasped between a hill and hill,
Where the bluegrass fields slope down.—
So we went. That summer-time
Lingers with me like a rhyme
Learned for dreamy beauty of
Its old-fashioned faith and love,
In some musing moment; sith
Heart-associated with
Joy that moment's quiet bore,
And forgotten nevermore.

VIII

Three sweet things love lives upon:
 Music, at whose fountain's brink
 Low he stoops his face to drink;
Seeing, as the wave is drawn,
 His near image rise and sink.
Three sweet things love lives upon.

Three sweet things love lives upon:
 Odor, whose red roses wreath
 His bright brow that shines beneath;
Hearing, as each bloom is blown,
 His soul's essence breathe and breathe.
Three sweet things love lives upon.

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

Three sweet things love lives upon:

Color, to whose rainbow he

Lifts his dark eyes burningly;

Feeling, as the wild hues dawn,

His high immortality.

Three sweet things love lives upon.

X

Memories of other days,—

Sad with whilom happiness,—

Rise before my musing gaze

In the twilight. . . . And your dress

Seems beside me, like a haze

Shimmering white; as when we went

'Neath the star-strewn firmament,

Love-led, with impatient feet

Down the night that, summer-sweet,

Sparkled o'er the, lamp-lit street.

Every look you gave me then

Comes before my eyes again,

Making music for my heart

On that path where once for us

Roses, red and amorous,

Grew, the roses red of love:

Roses, that are dead enough

On that path now! whence oft start

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

Out of recollected places,
With remembered forms and faces,
Dreams of love, like figures, woven
In my life's dark tapestry,
Beckoning, ever shadowy,
To my soul still.— O'er the cloven
Gulf of time I seem to hear
Words once whispered in my ear,
Calling — as might friends long dead,
With familiar voices deep,
Call to one who lies asleep,
Comforting.— So was I led
Backward to forgotten things,
Contiguities that spread
Sudden, unremembered wings:
And across my mind's still blue,
From the nest they fledged in, flew
Dazzling shapes that passion knew.

X

Ah! over full my heart is
Of sadness and of pain:
As a rose-flower in the garden
The dull dusk fills with rain;
As a blown red rose that shivers
And bows to the wind and rain.

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

So give me your hands and speak me
As once in the days of yore,
When love spoke sweetly to us,
The love that speaks no more :
The sound of your voice may help him
To speak in my heart once more.

Ah! over grieved my soul is,
And tired and sick for sleep,
As a poppy-bloom that withers,
Forgotten, where reapers reap :
As a harvested poppy-flower
That dies where reapers reap.

So bend to my face and kiss me
As once in the days of yore,
When the touch of your lips was magic
That restored to life once more :
The thought of your kiss, which awakens
To life that love once more.

XI

Sitting often I have, oh!
Often have desired you so ---
Yearned to kiss you as I did
When your love to me you gave,

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

In the moonlight, by the wave,
And a long-remembered kiss
Pressed upon your mouth that chid,
Then upon each eye's sweet lid —
That, all passion-shaken, I
With love-language will address
Each dear thing I know you by,
Picture, needle-work, or frame;
Each suggestive in the same
Perfume of past happiness:
Till, meseems, the ways we knew
Now again I tread with you
From the old-time tryst: and there
Feel the pressure of your hair
Cool and young upon my cheek,
And your breath's aroma: bare
On my arm your hand,— as weak
As a lily on a stream:—
And once more you look at me
With the sometime witchery,
And again I hear you speak;
And remembered ecstasy
Sweeps my soul again.— I seem
Dreaming. . . . Would I thus might
dream
Ever! and reality
Mix itself eternally

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

With such visions of the past,
Where my soul still holds you fast!

XII

When day dies, lone, forsaken,
And joy is kissed asleep;
When doubt's gray eyes awaken,
And love, with music taken
From hearts with sighings shaken,
Sits in the dusk to weep:

With ghostly-lifted finger
What memory then shall rise?
Of dark regret the bringer —
To tell the sorrowing singer
Of days whose echoes linger,
Till dawn unstars the skies.

When night is gone and, beaming,
Faith journeys forth to toil;
When hope's blue eyes wake gleaming,
And life is done with dreaming
The dreams that seem but seeming
Within the world's turmoil:

Who may forget the presence
Of death that walks unseen?

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

Whose scythe casts shadowy crescents
Around life's glittering essence,
As lessens, slowly lessens,
The space that lies between.

XIII

Bland was that October day,
Calm and balmy as the spring,
When we went a forest way,
Under beeches, lichen-gray,
To a valleyed opening;
Where the purple aster flowered,
And, like torches, savage-held,
Red the fiery sumac towered;
And, where gum-trees sentineled
Vistas, robed in gold and garnet,
Ripe the thorny chestnut shelled
Its brown plumpness. Bee and hornet
Droned around us; low the cricket,
Tireless in the wood-rose thicket,
Tremoloed; and, to the wind
All its moon-spun silver casting,
Swung the milkweed's pod, that thinned,
Where a butterfly seemed pinned:
And its clean flame on the sod
By the fading goldenrod,

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

Burned the white life-everlasting.—
It was not so much the time,
Nor the place, nor way we went,
That made all our moods to rhyme,
Nor the season's sentiment,
As it was the innocent
Carefree childhood of our hearts,
Reading each expression of
Death and change as life and love:
That impression joy imparts
Unto others and retorts
On itself, which then made glad
All the sorrow of decay,
As the memory of that day
Makes this day of autumn sad.

XIV

The pungent-breathed petunias
Hang riven of the rain;
And where the tiger-lily was
Now droops a tawny stain;
While in the twilight's purple pause
Earth dreams of heaven again.

When love sits down to sigh,
Where one lies all alone

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

Beneath the sod's green sky —
What boots it then to try,
Or to atone?

With ragged petals round its pod
The rain-wrecked poppy dies;
And where the hectic rose did nod
A crumbled crimson lies;
While distant as the dreams of God
The stars slip in the skies.

When love lies down to sleep,
When one is dead and gone —
Within the darkness deep
What boots it then to weep?
All 's said and done.

XV

Holding both your hands in mine,
Often have we sat together,
While, outside, the boisterous weather
Hung the wild wind on the pine
Like a black marauder, and
With a sudden warning hand
At the casement rapped. The night
Wrote no line or glimmer of light,

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

Starbeam-syllabled, within
Her dark book of death and sin,
Cloudy-chaptered tragically.—
Looking in your eyes, ah me!
Though I knew, I did not heed
What the night wrote there for us,
Threatening and ominous:
For love helped my heart to read
Forward to unopened pages
Of a coming day, that held
More for us than all the ages
Past, that it epitomized
In one sentence; where was spelled
What our present realized
Only — all the love that was
Past and still to be for us.

XVI

'Though in the garden, gray with dew,
All life lies withering,
And there 's no more to say or do,
No more to sigh or sing,
Come back with me the ways we knew
When buds were opening.

Perhaps we shall not search in vain
Within its wreck and gloom;

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

'Mid roses ruined of the rain
There still may live one bloom;
One flower, whose heart may still retain
The long-lost soul-perfume.

And then, perhaps, will come to us
The dreams we dreamed of yore;
And song, who spoke so beauteous,
Will speak to us once more;
And love, with eyes all amorous,
Will gaze as once before.

So 'though the yard is gray with dew,
And flowers are withering,
And there 's no more to say or do,
No more to sigh or sing,
Come back with me the ways we knew
When buds were opening.

XVII

Looking on the desolate street,
Where the first snow drifts and drives,
Trodden black of hurrying feet,
Where the athlete storm-wind strives
With each tree and dangling light,—
Centres, sphered with glittering white,—

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

Hissing in the dancing snow . . .
Backward in my mind I go
To that tempest-haunted night
Of two autumns past, when we,
Hastening homeward, were o'ertaken
Of the storm; and 'neath a tree,
With its wild leaves tempest-shaken,
Sheltered us in that forsaken,
Sad and ancient cemetery,—
Where folk came no more to bury.—
Haggard gravestones, mossed and crumbled,
Tottered round us, or o'ertumbled
In their sunken graves; and some,
Urned and obelisked above
Iron-fenced-in tombs, stood dumb
Records of forgotten love.
And again I see the west
Yawning inward to its core
Of electric-spasmed ore,
Swiftly, without pause or rest:
And a great wind sweeps the dust
Up abandoned sidewalks; and,
In the rotting trees, the gust
Shouts again — a voice that would
Make its gaunt self understood
Moaning over Death's lean land.—
And we sat there, hand in hand;

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

On the granite ; where we read,
By the instant skies o'erhead,
Something of one young and dead.
Yet the words begot no fear
In our souls : you leaned your cheek
Smiling on mine : very near
Were our lips : we did not speak.

XVIII

And suddenly alone I stood
With scared eyes gazing through the wood,
For some still sign of ill or good
To lead me from the solitude.

The day was at its twilighting ;
One cloud o'erhead spread a vast wing
Of rosy thunder ; vanishing
Behind the far hills' sullen ring.

Some stars shone timidly o'erhead ;
And towards the west's cadaverous red —
Like some wild dream that haunts the dead
In limbo — the lean moon was led.

Upon the sad, debatable
Vague lands of twilight slowly fell

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

A silence that I knew too well,
A sorrow that I can not tell.

What way to take, what path to go,
Whether into the east's gray glow,
Or where the west burnt red and low —
What way to choose I did not know.

So, hesitating, there I stood
Lost in my soul's uncertain wood;
One sign I craved of ill or good
To lead me from its solitude.

XIX

It was autumn: and a night
Full of whispers and of mist,
With a gray moon, wanly whist,
Hanging like a phantom light
O'er the hills. We stood among
Windy fields of weed and flower,
Where the withered seed-pod hung,
And the chill leaf-cricket sung.
Melancholy was the hour
With the mystery and lonesess
Of the year, that seemed to look
On its own departed face —

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

As our love then, in its oneness,
All its dead past did retrace,
And from that sad moment took
Presage of approaching parting.—
Sorrowful the hour and dark:
Low among the trees, now darting,
Now concealed, a lamp's pale spark —
Like a fen-fire — winked and lured
Shut among the shadows, where
All was doubtful, unassured,
Immaterial; and bare
Facts of unideal day
Changed to substance such as dreams.
And meseemed then, far away —
Farther than remotest gleams
Of the stars — lost, separated,
And estranged and out of reach,
Grew our lives away from each,
Far away as it was fated.

XX

There is no gladness in the day
Now you're away;
Dull is the morn, the noon is dull,
Once beautiful;
And when the sunset fills the skies
With dusking dyes,

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

With tired eyes and tired heart
I sit alone, I sigh apart,
 And wish for you,
 For only you.

Ah! darker now the night comes on
 Since you are gone ;
Sad are the stars, the moon is sad,
 Once wholly glad ;
And when the stars and moon are set,
 And earth lies wet,
With heart's regret and soul's hard ache,
I dream alone, I lie awake,
 And think of you,
 Of only you.

These, who once spake me, speak no more,
 Now all is o'er ;
Day hath forgot the language of
 Its hopes of love ;
Night, whose sweet lips were burdensome
 With dreams, is dumb ;
Far different from what used to be
With grief and loss they speak to me,
 They speak of you,
 Of only you.

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

XXI

So it ends — the path that crept
Through a land all slumber-whist;
Where the faded moonlight slept
Like a pale antagonist.
Now the star that led me onward,—
Reassuring with its light,—
Fails and falters; dipping downward
Leaves me wandering in night,
With old doubts, like hounds unchained,
Baying at my back, in flight. . . .
So it ends. The woods attained —
Where our hearts' Desire builded
A fair temple, fire-gilded,
With Hope's marble shrine within,
(Where the lineaments of our love
Shone, with lilies clad and crowned,
Under marble reared above
Sorrow and her sister, Sin,
Columned, wreathed and ribbon-wound,)—
In the forest I have found
But a ruin! All around
Lie the shattered capitals,
And vast fragments of the walls . . .
Like a climbing cloud,—that plies,
Wind-wrecked, o'er the moon that lies

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

'Neath its blackness,—taking on
Gradual certainties of wan,
Soft assaults of easy white,
(Till its huge cocoon, that holds
Like a moth the moon, unfolds,
And it passes) and the skies'
Emptiness and hungry night
Claim its bulk again, while she
Rides in lonely purity:—
So I found our temple broken;
And a musing moment's space
Love, whose latest word was spoken,
Seemed to meet me face to face,
Making bright that ruined place
With a white effulgence — then
Passed, and all was dark again.

WOMAN'S PORTION

I

The leaves are shivering on the thorn,
Drearily;
And sighing wakes the sad-eyed morn,
Wearily.

I press my thin face to the pane,
Drearily;
But never will he come again.
Wearily.

The rain hath sicklied day with haze,
Drearily;
My tears run downward as I gaze,
Wearily.

The mist and morn spake unto me,
Drearily: —
“What is this thing God gives to thee,
Wearily?”

WOMAN'S PORTION

I said unto the morn and mist,

Drearily : —

“ The babe unborn whom sin hath kissed,
Wearily.”

The morn and mist spake unto me,

Drearily : —

“ What is this thing which thou dost see,
Wearily? ”

I said unto the mist and morn,

Drearily : —

“ The shame of man and woman's scorn,
Wearily.”

“ He loved thee not,” they made reply,

Drearily.—

I said, “ Would God had let me die ! ”
Wearily.

II

My hopes are as a closed-up book,

Drearily,

Upon whose clasp of love I look
Wearily.

WOMAN'S PORTION

All night the rain raved overhead,
Drearily ;

All night I wept, awake in bed,
Wearily.

I heard the wind sweep wild and wide,
Drearily ;

And turned upon my face and sighed
Wearily.

The wind and rain spake unto me,
Drearily : —

“ What is this thing God takes from thee,
Wearily ? ”

I said unto the rain and wind,
Drearily : —

“ The love, for which my body sinned,
Wearily.”

The rain and wind spake unto me,
Drearily : —

“ What are these things that burden thee,
Wearily ? ”

I said unto the wind and rain,
Drearily : —

“ Past joys, and dreams whose ghosts remain,
Wearily.”

WOMAN'S PORTION

“Thou lov'st him still,” they made reply,
Drearily.—

I said, “Would God that I could die!”
Wearily.

KU KLUX

We have sent him seeds of the melon's core,
And nailed a warning upon his door:
By the Ku Klux laws we can do no more.

Down in the hollow, 'mid crib and stack,
The roof of his low-porched house looms black;
Not a line of light at the door-sill's crack.

Yet arm and mount! and mask and ride!
The hounds can sense though the fox may hide!
And for a word too much`men oft have died.

The clouds blow heavy toward the moon.
The edge of the storm will reach it soon.
The kildee cries and the lonesome loon.

The clouds shall flush with a wilder glare
Than the lightning makes with its angled flare,
When the Ku Klux verdict is given there.

KU KLUX

In the pause of the thunder rolling low,
A rifle's signal — who shall know
From the wind's fierce hurl and the rain's black
blow?

Only the signature, written grim
At the end of the message brought to him —
A hempen rope and a twisted limb.

So arm and mount! and mask and ride!
The hounds can sense though the fox may hide!
And for a word too much men oft have died.

AT DAWN

Far off I heard dark waters rush :
The sky was cold : the dawn broke green :
And wrapped in twilight and strange hush
The gray wind moaned between.

A voice rang through the House of Sleep,
And through its halls there went a tread ;
Mysterious raiment seemed to sweep
Around one lying dead.

And then I knew that I had died,
I, who had suffered so and sinned —
And 't was myself I stood beside
In the gray dawn and wind.

PRÆTERITA

I

Low belts of rushes ragged with the blast ;
Lagoons of marish reddening with the west ;
And o'er the marsh the water-fowl's unrest
While daylight dwindles and the dusk falls fast.
Set in sad walls, all mossy with the past,
An old stone gateway with a crumbling crest ;
A garden where death drowns manifest ;
And in gaunt yews the shadowy house at last.
Here, like an unseen spirit, silence talks
With echo and the wind in each gray room
Where melancholy slumbers with the rain :
Or, like some gentle ghost, the moonlight walks
In the dim garden, which her smile makes bloom
With all the old-time loveliness again.

II

When slow the twilight settles o'er its roof,
And from the haggard oaks unto its door
The rain comes, wild as one who rides before

PRÆTERITA

His enemies that follow, hoof to hoof;
And in each window's gusty curtain-woof
The rain-wind sighs, like one who mutters o'er
Some tale of love and crime; and, on the floor,
The sunset spreads red stains as bloody proof:—
From hall to hall and haunted stair to stair,
Through all the house, a dread, that drags me
to'ard

The ancient dusk of that avoided room,
Wherein she sits with ghostly golden hair,
And eyes that gaze beyond her soul's sad doom,
Waking the ghost of that old harpsichord.

IN SHADOW

I

A moth sucks at a flaming flower :
The moon beams on the old church-tower :
 I watched the moth and rising moon,
 One silver tip
 Of glimmer, slip
 Through ghostly tree-tops, deep with June,
To dream above the church an hour.

II

The gray moth on the dewy pod
Dreams ; and the sleepy poppies nod
 Their drugged heads in the languid breeze,
 That whispers low
 Of some dim woe,
 And spirit-like among the trees,
Strews snowy petals on the sod.

IN SHADOW

III

My soul dreams at life's blood-red heart
Of that thou art: of thee, who art
 All silence: saying something fair
 As phantoms know
 When moon-flowers blow
 And spirits meet: the beauty rare
Of which thou, too, hast grown a part.

IV

My heart, behold, is but a bloom
A pale thought clings to by a tomb,
 A tomb that holds the one I love,
 All wan of cheek,
 Whom, wild and weak,
 My heart bows down and breaks above,
Grief-haunted in the moonlit gloom.

IN THE OWL-LIGHT

I

Uplifted darkness and the owl-light breaks,
Scuds the wild land, pursuing patch with patch,
As when deep daisy fields a swift wind shakes.—
How clumsily I raised the crazy latch! . . .
So.— When yon black cloud, light-absorbing,
rakes
Again the moon's bald disk —
Out! and the storm will snatch
Again my hair, made lank with wind and rain
Two hours since . . . There! from the
ragged plain
A great cloud-besom sweeps the beams again!—
Out! out! . . . No fear of risk? . . .

II

First, past the fellside, where the bramble-hol-
low
Whines, wolf-like, with the wind; gaunt wind,
that grieves

IN THE OWL-LIGHT

Through the one sickly ash, whose withered
leaves
Worry and mutter, shriveled as the lips
Of bent hags kissing. Then — the slope that
whips
The face with brush; and where a gnarled vine
slips,
Snake-like, from off a rock, that seems to wal-
low,—
One mass of briers,— a humpbacked hulk of
hair,
A gorgon head of writhings, huge, that heaves,
When, heaped abruptly on it, *flare!*
Burst rain and tempest-glare.—
This passed, I follow
A thorny slip of path until
I reach the storm-scarred summit of the hill.

III

Let me not think of it! — as I go thence,—
That thought I can not kill!
Ungovernable! that dogs my footsteps still,
Like something real and living; which my will
Is powerless against.— Ah! when that fence,
Dividing the dark ridges of the hill,
Is passed, shall I not then be breathless? ill

IN THE OWL-LIGHT

With sinking sense
Of ghastly things to come?—Some sterner
 strength
Sustain my soul!—Beyond the hill the dense
Dead wood 's to pass, and then . . . that
 livid length
Of mooning water, spectral and immense
With sullen storm and night. . . .
There, if the ghoulish wind,—
That knows well as I know how I have sinned,—
Will cease to curse me in its hag-like spite,
Alone with all the horror of my soul,
I shall behold,
Now this way, and now that way rolled,
Lifeless, among cramped reeds, the storm has
 thinned,—
With wide, white eyes, metallic in the light
Of the impassive moon:—in gusty roll
Of washing ripples, webby, slippery locks
Dabbling and dark; and,—wedged between
 sharp rocks,—
Two rocks, two iron fangs,
Whereon the lake's mad lip, pale-foaming
 clangs,—
Wild-pinched and water-strangled white,
His murdered face! that mocks.

ASHLY MERE

Come! look in the shadowy water here,
The stagnant water of Ashly Mere:
Where the stirless depths are dark but clear,
What is the thing that lies there?—
A lily-pod, half-sunk from sight?
Or spawn of the toad, all water-white?
Or ashen blur of the moon's wan light?
Or a woman's face and eyes there?

Now lean to the water a listening ear,
The haunted water of Ashly Mere:
What is the sound that you seem to hear
In the ghostly hush of the deeps there?—
A withered reed, that the ripple lips?
Or a night-bird's wing, that the surface whips?
Or the rain in a leaf that drips and drips?
Or a woman's voice that weeps there?

Now look and listen! but not too near
The lonely water of Ashly Mere!—
For so it happens this time each year
As you lean by the Mere and listen:

ASHLY MERE

And the moaning voice I understand,—
For oft I have watched it draw to land,
And lift from the water a ghastly hand
And a face whose dead eyes glisten.

And this is the reason why every year
To the hideous water of Ashly Mere
I come when the woodland leaves are sear,
And the autumn moon hangs hoary:
For here by the Mere was wrought a wrong
But the old, old story is overlong—
And woman is weak and man is strong,
And the Mere's and mine is the story.

THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN

On the black road through the wood,
 As I rode,
There the Headless Horseman stood,
By the dark pool in the wood,
 As I rode.

From the shadow of an oak,
 As I rode,
Demon steed and rider broke;
By the thunder-riven oak,
 As I rode.

On the wild way through the plain,
 As I rode,
At my back he whirled like rain;
On the tempest-blackened plain,
 As I rode.

Four black hoofs shod red with fire,
 As I rode,
Woke the wild rocks, dark and dire;
Eyes and nostrils streaming fire,
 As I rode.

THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN

On the deep path through the rocks,
 As I rode,
I could touch his horse's locks;
Through the echo-hurling rocks,
 As I rode.

And again I looked behind,
 As I rode —
Dark as night and swift as wind,
Towering, he rode behind,
 As I rode.

On the steep road through the dell,
 As I rode,
Far away I heard a bell,
In the church beyond the dell,
 As I rode.

And my soul cried out in prayer,
 As I rode —
Lo! the demon went in air,
When my soul called out in prayer,
 As I rode.

THE WEREWOLF

She

Nay; still amort, my love?—Why dost thou
lag?

He

The strix-owl cried.

She

Nay! 't was yon stream that leaps
Hoarse from the black pines of the Hakel steeps;
Its moon-wild water glittering down the crag.—
Why so aghast, sweetheart? Why dost thou
stop?

He

The Demon Huntsman passed with hooting
horn!

She

Nay! 't was the blind wind sweeping through
the thorn

Around the ruins of the Dumburg's top.

THE WEREWOLF

He

My limbs are cold.

She

Come! warm thee in my arms.

He

My eyes are weary.

She

Rest, then, love, on mine.

He

I am athirst.

She

Quench, on my lips, thy thirst.—
O dear belovéd, how thy last kiss warms
My blood again!

He

Off! . . . How thy eyeballs shine!—
Thou beast! . . . thou — Ah! . . . thus do
I die, accursed!

THE SEA SPIRIT

Ah me! I shall not waken soon
From dreams of such divinity!
A spirit singing 'neath the moon
To me.

Wild sea-spray driven of the storm
Is not so wildly white as she,
Who beckoned with a foam-white arm
To me.

With eyes dark green, and golden-green
Long locks, that sparkled drippingly,
Out of the green wave she did lean
To me.

And sang; till Earth and Heaven were
A far, forgotten memory;
Till more than Heaven seemed in her
To me:—

THE SEA SPIRIT

Sleep, sweeter than love's face or home,
And death's immutability,
And music of the plangent foam,
 Ah me!

Sweep over her with all thy ships,
With all thy stormy tides, O sea!
The memory of immortal lips,
 And me!

THE VAMPIRE

A lily in a twilight place?
Or moonflower in the lonely night?—
Strange beauty of a woman's face
Of wildflower-white!

The rain that hangs a star's green ray
Slim on a leaf-point's restlessness,
Is not so glimmering green and gray
As was her dress.

I drew her dark hair from her eyes,
And in their deeps beheld a while
Such shadowy moonlight as the skies
Of Hell may smile.

She held her mouth up, redly wan
And burning cold: — I bent and kissed
Such rosy snow as some wild dawn
Makes of a mist.

THE VAMPIRE

God shall not take from me that hour,
When round my neck her white arms clung!
When 'neath my lips, like some fierce flower,
Her white throat swung!

Nor words she murmured while she leaned!
Witch-words, she holds me softly by,—
The spell that binds me to a fiend
Until I die.

WILL-O'-THE-WISP

I

There in the calamus he stands
With frog-webbed feet and bat-winged hands;
His glow-worm garb glints goblin-wise;
 And elfishly, and impishly,
Above the gleam of owlet eyes,
A death's-head cap of downy dyes
 Nods out at me, and beckons me.

II

Now in the reeds his face looks white
As witch-down on a witches' night;
Now through the dark, old, haunted mill,
 All eerily, all flickeringly
He flits; and with a whippoorwill
Mouth calls, and seems to syllable,
 "Come follow me! oh, follow me!"

WILL-O'-THE-WISP

III

Now o'er the sluggish stream he wends,
A slim light at his fingers' ends ;
The spotted spawn, the toad hath clomb,
Slips oozily, sucks slimily ;
His easy footsteps seem to come —
Like bubble-gaspings of the scum —
This side of me ; that side of me.

IV

There by the stagnant pool he stands,
A foxfire lamp in flickering hands ;
The weeds are slimy to the tread,
And mockingly, and gloatingly,
With slanted eyes and pointed head,
He leans above a face long dead,—
The face of me ! of me ! of me !

REVISITED

It was beneath a waning moon when all the
woods were sear,
And winds made eddies of the leaves that whis-
pered far and near,
I met her on the bramble bridge we parted at
last year.

At first I deemed her but a mist that faltered in
that place,
An autumn mist beneath the trees the moon's
thin beams did lace,
Until I neared and in the moon beheld her face
to face.

The crinkle of the summer heat above the
drouth-burnt leas;
The shimmer of the thistle-drift adown the si-
lences;
The gliding of the fairy-fire between the swamp
and trees:

REVISITED

All qualified her presence as a sorrow may a
dream —

The vague suggestion of a self; the glimmer of
a gleam;

The actual and unreal of the things that are and
seem.

Where once she came with welcome and glad
eyes, all loving-wise,

She passed, and gave no greeting that my heart
could recognize,

With far, set face, unseeing, and sad, unremem-
bering eyes.

It was beneath a waning moon when woods were
bleak and sear,

And winds made whispers of the leaves that
edded far and near,

I met her ghost upon the bridge we parted at
last year.

THE OLD HOUSE

Quaint and forgotten, by an unused road,
An old house stands: around its doors the dense
 Rank ironweeds grow high;
The chipmunks make a highway of its fence;
And on its sunken flagstones newt and toad
 As still as lichens lie.

The timid snake upon its hearth's cool sand
Sleeps undisturbed; the squirrel haunts its roof;
 And in the clapboard sides
Of closets,—dim with many a spider woof,—
Like the uncertain tapping of a hand,
 The beetle-borer hides.

Above its lintel, under mossy eaves,
The mud-wasps build their cells; and in the
 floor
Of its neglected porch
The black bees nest: through each deserted
 door,

THE OLD HOUSE

Vague as faint, phantom footsteps, steal the
leaves
And dropped cones of the larch.

But come with me when sunset's magic old
Transforms this ruin — yea! transmutes this
house :

When windows, one by one,—
Like Age's eyes, that Youth's love-dreams
arouse,—
Grow lairs of fire; and a mouth of gold
Its wide door towards the sun.

Or let us wait until each rain-stained room
Is carpeted with moonlight, patterned oft
With shadow'd boughs o'erhead;
And through the house the wind goes rustling
soft,
As might the ghost — a whisper of perfume —
Of some sweet girl long dead.

THE FOREST OF DREAMS

I

Where was I last Friday night?—

Within the Forest of dark Dreams
Following the blur of a goblin light,
That led me over dreadful streams,
Whereon the scum of the spawn was spread,
And the blistered slime, in stagnant seams;
Where the weed and the moss swam black and
dead,

Like a drowned girl's hair, in the ropy ooze:
And the jack-o'-lantern light that led
Flickered the foxfire trees o'erhead,
And the owl-like things at airy cruise.

II

Where was I last Friday night?—

Within the Forest of dark Dreams
Following a form of shadowy white
With my own wild face it seems.—

THE FOREST OF DREAMS

Did a raven's wing just fan my hair?
Or a web-winged bat brush by my face?
Or the hand of — something I did not dare
Look round to see in that obscene place!
Where the boughs, with their leaves a-devil's-
dance,
And the thorn-tree bush, where the wind made
moan,
Had more than a strange significance
Of life and of evil not their own.

III

Where was I last Friday night?—
Within the Forest of dark Dreams
Seeing the mists rise left and right,
Like the leathery fog that heaves and steams
From the rolling horror of Hell's red
streams:
While the wind, that tossed in the tattered
tree,
And danced alone with the last mad leaf —
Or *was* it the wind? . . . kept whisper-
ing me,
“Come! bury it here with its own black grief,
And its heart of fire that naught can
save!”—
And there in the darkness I seemed to see
My own self digging my soul a grave.

THE CITY OF DARKNESS

Wide-walled it stands in heathen lands
Beside a mystic sea,
Its streets strange-trod of many a god
And templed blasphemy.

Far through the night, with light on light,
It flames beside the sea ;
While overhead an unseen dread
Impends eternally.

There is a sound above, around,
Of music by the sea ;
And weird and wide the torches glide
Of pagan revelry.

There is a noise as of a voice
That calls beneath the sea ;
And all the deep heaves, as in sleep,
With vague expectancy.

THE CITY OF DARKNESS

Then slowly up — as in a cup
Seethes poison — swells the sea;
As through black glass, wild mass on mass,
The town glows fiery.

Red-lit it glowers, like Hell's dark towers,
Closed in the iron sea;
And monster forms in awful swarms
Wing round it cloudily.

Still overhead the unseen dread,
Whose shadow dyes the sea,
At wrath-winged wait behind its gate
Till God shall set it free.

An earthquake crash; a taloned flash —
And, lo! from sky to sea
A sworded Doom that stalks the gloom,
Crowned with Death's agony.

And where it burned, a flame inurned,
Blood-red within the sea,
The phantasm of the dread above
Sits in immensity.

UNDER DARK SKIES

I

Hills rolled in woods, that lair the lynx and fox;
Harsh fields, that lean before the woods' advance
As wild-men fly from hunters, tossing locks
Through which their eyes of yellow fire
glance;
Great blurs of briers and lugubrious rocks,—
A bristling blackness,— with a pool beneath,
Whereo'er the wisps, like something evil,
dance;
And then a house like the wrecked face of
death.

II

There where the moon hangs sinister, o'er
parched
And haggard thorns,— a golden battle-bow,
Or shield of bronze, old wars have scarred and
scorched,—

UNDER DARK SKIES

What crime hath cursed it . . . who shall
ever know?—

Night only! Night, with flickering flame, who
torched

That moment when blood branded black its
sod,

And in the pool a ghastly face sank slow

Beneath the storm and rushing fire of God.

REMBRANDTS

I

I shall not soon forget her and her eyes,
The haunts of hate, where suffering seemed to
 write
Its stealthy name, whose syllables are sighs,
 In strange and starless night.

I shall not soon forget her and her face,
So quiet, yet uneasy as a dream
That stands on tip-toe in a haunted place
 And listens for a scream.

She made me feel as one, alone, may feel
In some grand, ghostly mansion of old time,
The presence of a treasure, walls conceal,
 And secret of a crime.

II

With lambent faces, mimicking the moon,
 The water lilies lie;
Dotting the darkness of the long lagoon
 As stars, the sky.

REMBRANDTS

A face, the whiteness of a water-flower,
 With pollen-golden hair,
In shadow half, half in the moonlight's glower,
 Lifts slowly there.

A young girl's face, death makes mute marble of,
 Turned to the moon and me,
Sad with the pathos of unspeakable love,
 Floating to sea.

III

One listening bent, in dread of something coming
 He can not flee nor balk —
A phantom footstep, in the ghostly gloaming,
 That haunts a ruined walk.

Long has he given his whole heart's hard en-
 deavor
 To labor, dark and dawn,
Dreaming that Love still watched his toil and
 ever
 Turned kindly eyes thereon.

Now in his life, he feels, there nears an hour,
 Inevitable, alas!
When in the darkness he shall cringe and cower,
 And see his dead self pass.

GHOSTS

Was it the strain of the waltz that, repeating
Love, so bewitched me? or only the gleam
There of the lustres, that set my heart beating,
Feeling your presence as one feels a dream?

For, on a sudden, the woman of fashion,
Soft at my side in her diamonds and lace,
Vanished, and pale with reproach or with passion,
You, my dead sweetheart, looked up in my
face.

Music, the nebulous lights, and the sifting
Fragrance of women made amorous the air;
Born of these three and my thoughts you came
drifting,
Clad in dim muslin, a rose in your hair.

There in the waltz, that followed the lancers,
Hard to my breast did I crush you and hold;

GHOSTS

Far through the stir and the throng of the
dancers

Onward I bore you as often of old.

Pale were your looks; and the rose in your
tresses

Paler of hue than the dreams we have lost;—
“Who,” then I said, “is it sees or who
guesses,

Here in the hall, that I dance with a ghost?”

Gone!—And the dance and the music are
ended.

Gone!—And the rapture is turned into sighs.
And, on my arm, in her elegance splendid,
The woman of fashion smiles up in my eyes.

Had I forgotten? and did she remember?—
She who is dead, whom I can not forget:
She, for whose sake all my heart is an ember
Covered with ashes of dreams and regret.

AT MIDNIGHT

At midnight in the trysting wood
I wandered by the waterside,
When, soft as mist, before me stood
My sweetheart who had died.

But so unchanged was she, meseemed
That I had only dreamed her dead;
Glad in her eyes the lovelight gleamed;
Her lips were warm and red.

What though the stars shone shadowy through
Her form as by my side she went,
And by her feet no drop of dew
Was stirred, no blade was bent!

What though through her white loveliness
The wildflower dimmed, the moonlight
paled,
Real to my touch she was; no less
Than when the earth prevailed.

She took my hand. My heart beat wild.
She kissed my mouth. I bowed my head.
Then, gazing in my eyes, she smiled:
"When did'st thou die?" she said.

THAT NIGHT

That night I sat listening, as in a swoon,
 With half-closed eyes,
To far-off bells, low-lulling as a tune
 That drifts and dies
Beneath the flowery fingers of the June
 Harping to summer skies.

And then I dreamed the world I knew was gone,
 And some one brought,—
Leading me far o'er sainted hill and lawn,
 In heavenly thought,—
My soul where well the sources of the dawn
 With dew and fire fraught.

Above me the majestic dome of night,
 With star on star,
Sparkled; in which one star shone blinding
 bright;
 Radiant as spar
That walls the halls of morning, pearly white
 Around her golden car.

THAT NIGHT

About me temples, vast in desert seas,
 Columned a land
Of ruins — bones of old monstrosities
 God's awful hand
Had smitten ; homes of dead idolatries,
 O'erwhelmed with dust and sand.

Their bestial gods, caked thick with gems and
 gold,
 Their blasphemies
Of beauty, rent ; 'mid ruined altars rolled ;
 Their agonies
And rites abolished ; and their priests of old —
 Dust on the desert breeze.

Then Syrian valleys, purple with veiling mist,
 Meseemed I trailed,
Where the frail floweret, by the dewdrop kissed,
 Soft-blushing, quailed ;
And drowned in dinged deeps of amethyst
 The moon-mad bulbul wailed.

On glimmering wolds I seemed to hear the bleat
 Of folded flocks :
Then shepherds passed me, bare of head and
 feet ;
 And then an ox

THAT NIGHT

Lowed; and, above me, swept the solemn beat
Of angel wings and locks.

A manger then I seemed to see where bent,
In adoration,
Above a babe, Men of the Orient,
Where, low of station,
His mother lay, while round them swam sweet
scent
And sounds of jubilation.

And then I woke. The rose-white moon above
Bloomed on my sight; —
And in her train the stars of winter drove,
Light upon light;
While Yuletide bells rocked, pealing “peace and
love”
Down all the aisles of night.

GRAMARYE

There are some things that entertain me more
Than men or books ; and to my knowledge seem
A key of Poetry, made of magic lore
Of childhood, opening many a fabled door
Of superstition, mystery, and dream
 Enchantment locked of yore.

For, when through dusking woods my pathway
 lies,
Often I feel old spells, as o'er me flits
The bat, like some black thought that, troubled,
 flies
Round some dark purpose ; or before me cries
The owl that, like an evil conscience, sits,
 A shadowy voice and eyes.

Then, when down blue canals of cloudy snow
The white moon oars her boat, and woods vi-
 brate
With crickets, lo, I hear the hautboys blow

GRAMARYE

Of Elfland; and, when gold the fireflies glow,
See where the goblins hold a Fairy Fête
 With many a lanthorn-row.

Strange growths, that ooze from long-dead logs
 and spread
A creamy fungus, where the snail, uncoiled,
And fat slug feed at morn, are Pixy bread
Made of the yeasted dew; the lichens red,
Beside these grown, are meat the Brownies
 broiled
 Above a glow-worm bed.

The smears of silver on the webs that line
The knuckled roots, or stretch, white-wov'n,
 within
The hollow stump, are stains of Faery wine
Spilled on the cloth where Elfland sat to dine,
When night beheld them drinking, chin to chin,
 Of th' moon's fermented shine.

What but their chairs the mushrooms on the
 lawn,
Or toadstools hidden under flower and fern,
Tagged with the dotting dew! — With knees
 updrawn
Far as his eyes, have I not come upon

GRAMARYE

Puck seated there? but scarcely round could
turn

When, presto! he was gone.

And so though Science from the woods hath
tracked

The Elfin; and with prosy lights of day
Unhallowed all his haunts; and, dulling, blacked
Our vision, still hath Beauty never lacked
For seers yet; who, in some wizard way,
Prove fancy real as fact.

THE WORLD OF FAERY

I

When in the pansy-purpled stain
Of sunset one far star is seen,
Like one bright drop of rain,
Out of the forest, deep and green,
O'er me a Spirit seems to lean,
The fairest of her train.

II

The Spirit, dowered with fadeless youth
Of Lay and Legend, young as when,
Close to her side, in sooth,
She led me from the marts of men,
A child, into her world, which then
To me was true as truth.

III

Her hair is like the silken husk
That holds the corn, the gloss that glows ;
Her brow is white as tusk ;

THE WORLD OF FAERY

Her body is like some sweet rose,
And through her gossamer raiment shows
Like starlight closed in musk.

IV

She smiles at me ; she nods at me ;
And by her looks I am beguiled
Into the mystery
Of ways I knew when, as a child,
She led me 'mid her blossoms wild
Of faery fantasy.

V

The blossoms that, when night is here,
Become sweet mouths that sigh soft tales ;
Or, each, a jeweled ear
Leaned to the elfin dance that trails
Down moonrayed cirques of haunted vales
To cricket song and cheer.

VI

The blossoms that, closed up all day,—
Primrose and poppy,—darkness opes,
Slowly, to free a fay,

THE WORLD OF FAERY

Who, silken-soft, leaps forth and ropes
With rain each web that, starlit, slopes
Between each grassy spray.

VII

The blossoms from which elves are
born,—
Sweet wombs of mingled scent and snow,
Whose deeps are cool as morn;
Wherein I oft have heard them blow
Their pixy trumpets, silvery low
As some bee's drowsy horn.

VIII

So was it when my childhood roamed
The woodland's dim enchanted ground,
Where every mushroom domed
Its disc for them to revel round;
Each glow-worm forged its flame,—
green-drowned
In hollow snow that foamed

IX

Of lilies,— for their lantern light,
To lamp their dance beneath the moon;
Each insect of the night,—

THE WORLD OF FAERY

That rasped its thin, vibrating tune,—
And owl that raised its sleepy croon,
 Made music for their flight.

X

So is it still when twilight fills
My soul with childhood's memories
 That haunt the far-off hills,
And people with dim things the trees,—
With faery forms that no man sees,
 And dreams that no man kills.

XI

Then all around me sway and swing
The Puck-lights of their firefly train,
 Their elfin revelling;
And in the bursting pods, that rain
Their seeds around my steps, again
 I hear their footsteps ring.

XII

The faery feet that fall once more
Within my way; — and then I see,—
 As oft I saw before,—
Her Spirit rise, who shimmeringly
Fills all my world with poetry,—
 The Loveliness of Yore.

THERE ARE FAIRIES

I

There are fairies, bright of eye,
Who the wildflowers' warders are:
Ouphes, that chase the firefly,
Elves, that ride the shooting-star:
Fays, who in a cobweb lie,
Swinging on a moonbeam bar;
Or who harness bumble-bees,
Grumbling on the clover leas,
To a blossom or a breeze,
That's their fairy car.
If you care, you too may see
There are fairies.— Verily,
There are fairies.

II

There are fairies. I could swear
I have seen them busy, where
Roses loose their scented hair,
In the moonlight weaving, weaving,

THERE ARE FAIRIES

Out of starlight and the dew,
Glinting gown and shimmering shoe;
Or, within a glow-worm lair,
 From the dark earth slowly heaving
Mushrooms whiter than the moon,
On whose tops they sit and croon,
With their grig-like mandolins,
To fair fairy ladykins,
Leaning from the window-sill
Of a rose or daffodil,
Listening to their serenade
All of cricket music made.
Follow me, oh, follow me!
Ho! away to Faerie!
Where your eyes like mine may see
There are fairies.— Verily,
 There are fairies.

III

There are fairies. Elves that swing
In a wild and rainbow ring
Through the air; or mount the wing
Of a bat to courier news
To the fairy King and Queen:
Fays, who stretch the gossamers
On which twilight hangs the dew;

THERE ARE FAIRIES

Who, within the moonlight sheen,
Whisper dimly in the ears
Of the flowers words so sweet
That their hearts are turned to musk
And to honey; things that beat
In their veins of gold and blue:
Ouphes, that shepherd moths of dusk —
Soft of wing and gray of hue —
Forth to pasture on the dew.
There are fairies; verily;
Verily;
For the old owl in the tree,
Hollow tree,
He who maketh melody
For them tripping merrily,
Told it me.
There are fairies.— Verily,
There are fairies.

ON MIDSUMMER NIGHT

I

All the poppies, in their beds
Nodding crumpled, crimson heads;
And the larkspurs, in whose ears
Twilight hangs, like twinkling tears,
Sleepy jewels of the rain;
All the violets, that strain
Eyes of amaranthine gleam;
And the clover-blooms that dream
With pink baby-fists closed tight,—
They can hear upon this night,
Noiseless as the moon's white light,
Footsteps and the glimmering flight,
 Shimmering flight,
 Of the Fairies.

II

Every sturdy four-o'clock,
In its variegated frock;
Every slender sweet-pea, too,

ON MIDSUMMER NIGHT

In its hood of pearly hue;
Every primrose pale that dozes
By the wall and slow uncloses
A sweet mouth of dewy dawn
In a little silken yawn,—
On this night of silvery sheen,
They can see the Fairy Queen,
On her palfrey white, I ween,
Tread dim cirques of haunted green,
 Moonlit green,
 With her Fairies.

III

Never a foxglove-bell, you see,
That's a cradle for a bee;
Never a lily, that's a house
Where the butterfly may drowse;
Never a rose-bud or a blossom,
That unfolds its honeyed bosom
To the moth, that nestles deep
And there sucks itself to sleep,—
But can hear and also see,
On this night of witchery,
All that world of Faerie,
All that world where airily,
 Merrily,
 Trip the Fairies.

ON MIDSUMMER NIGHT

IV

It was last Midsummer Night,
In the moon's uncertain light,
That I stood among the flowers,
And, in language unlike ours,
Heard them speaking of the Pixies,
Trolls and Gnomes and Water-Nixes;
How in *this* flow'r's ear a Fay
Hung a gem of rainy ray;
And round *that* flow'r's throat had set,
Dim, a dewdrop carcanet;
Then among the mignonette
Stretched a cobweb-hammock wet,
Dewy wet,
For the Fairies.

V

Long I watched, but never a one,
Ariel, Puck, or Oberon,
Mab, or Queen Titania —
Fairest of them all they say —
Clad in morning-glory hues,
Did I glimpse among the dews.
Only once I thought the torch
Of that elfin-rogue and arch,

ON MIDSUMMER NIGHT

Robin Goodfellow, afar
Flashed along a woodland bar —
Bright, a jack-o'-lantern star,
A green lamp of firefly spar,
 Glow-worm spar,
 Loved of Fairies.

THE DANCE OF THE FAIRIES

On the glimmering coppice,
From her shadowy hair,
Long, silvery poppies
Of moon-litten air
The Night hath flung there.

In the fern-fronded hollow
The fireflies stream,
Uncertainly follow,
With lanterns of gleam,
Some spirit or dream.

The forest is fragrant;
The night-hazes swirl
And trail,—through the vagrant
Deep ferns that unfurl,—
Faint footsteps of pearl.

From hill and from valley,
Where the moon is at home;
From rocks,—musically,—
Where singing streams comb
Wild tresses of foam;

THE DANCE OF THE FAIRIES

With a ripple and twinkle
Of luminous arms,
And footfalls that tinkle
The darkness, in swarms
Of flower-like forms:

We speed to the revel
From bloom and from brier,
With locks that dishevel,
And feet, like the fire,
Winged wild with desire.

Like the wind on the mountain,
We circle and dance;
Like the foam of the fountain,
That sings of romance,
We glimmer and glance.

Swift, swift we go swinging
Down the slanted moonbeam,
In spirals faint flinging
A rainbow-rayed gleam
On sward and on stream.

You may hear, like a murmur,
The swirl of our hair;

THE DANCE OF THE FAIRIES

Our footfall; no firmer
Than leaves on the air
When branches blow bare.

To men who are favored
In spiritual wise,
Whose hearts have not quavered
To see us, we rise
And doff all disguise.

Come away then, come hither,
In the moon-blossomed night!
Ere the star-flowers wither,
And Morning, the white,
Reaps, mows them with light.

Come hither, where singing
Sounds softer than tears,
Or kisses, sweet clinging,
Or music one hears
With memory's ears.

Come join us, whose kisses
Are waiting for you;
Come, catch at our tresses,
And dance through the dew!
Come away, and pursue!

THE DANCE OF THE FAIRIES

Come, come to the coppice,
The violet ridge;
The torrent, whose top is
A rainbow,— a bridge
We tread like the midge.—

Come, mortal, come hither!
Come dance with your dreams,
Ere the golden spark wither
Of the glow-worm that gleams
Like a star in still streams.

THE CHANGELING

In the night I heard the sea ;
Saw the round moon, white as wool,
Or a bloom in Faerie,
Rise above the hawthorn-tree,
White and wonderful,
Weird and wonderful.

Through the door there came to me
Breezy whispers, fragrant as
Wafts that rock the honey-bee,
Cradled sweet in Arcady,
In the bluebelled grass,
In the rose-strewn grass.

Then I saw them ; suddenly ;
Three red caps against the moon ; —
And three voices whispered me,
“ We have come to dance for thee,
Sing for thee a tune,
Sing an elfin tune.”

THE CHANGELING

They were Fairies, Fairies three:

 Nearer to my crib they drew,
Singing all the time to me,
Till mine eyes closed dreamily,
 Closed, and naught I knew,
 And no more I knew.

While I slept I heard the three

 Whispering round my baby there,
White as moonlit ivory,
In its crib of ebony,
 All my joy and care,
 All my love and care.

Now I sit here, as you see,

 And my heart is all bereft,
Sighing, singing wearily
To this strange thing on my knee,
 This wild thing they left,
 Changeling that they left.

THE ELF-QUEEN

You ask me why I wandered wide
When Summer sighed o'er dying June? —
To see the Fairy People ride
Beneath the moon.

Wild poppies hedged a hawthorne copse,
Where glow-worms hung dim lamps of
gold;
A sudden whisper bowed their tops,
And then, behold!

Between the poppies and the mead
I saw the Fairies riding down:
One fair-faced Fairy in the lead
Crowned with a crown.

The night was ringing with their reins,
So loud the cricket hushed its song;
Bells up and down their horses' manes
Swung sweet along.

THE ELF-QUEEN

And whistles, that took all the wind
With music when they shook their manes;
So that the fields, before, behind,
Rang with sweet strains.

And as their bridles chiming swung,
The night seemed cured of every qualm;
And my sick heart, so wild of tongue,
Was almost calm.

The steeds they rode were fairy steeds,
Of filmy form and gossamer green;
And every elf was clad in weeds
Of silken sheen.

Above, a beam of silver light
Beat time to their wild fairy tune,
And danced and glanced,—an elfin white
Not of the moon.

They were so small the harebell's blue
Had helmeted each tiny head,
Save that fair Fay, who, tall as two,
The Fairies led.

Dark tresses floated from a tire
Of diamond sparks that snapped with light;

THE ELF-QUEEN

And all her white sark seemed of fire
Shimmering the night.

I would have thrown me at her feet
And told her of my grief and pain ;
And she, perhaps, had helped me meet
My love again.

Alas ! a cock crew far away,
A long-necked cry ; and, swift as thought,
The Elf-Queen and her company
Passed into naught.

SONG OF THE ELF

I

Where the poppies, with their shields,
Sentinel
Forest and the harvest fields,
In the bell
Of a blossom, fair to see,
There I stall the bumblebee,
My good stud;
There I stable him and hold,
Harness him with hairy gold;
There I ease his burly back
Of the honey and its sack
Filched from bloom and bud.

II

Where the glow-worm lights its lamp,
There I lie;
Where, above the grasses damp,
Moths go by;
Now within the fussy brook,

SONG OF THE ELF

Where the waters wind and crook
 Round the rocks,
I go sailing down the gloom
Straddling light a wisp of broom;
Or, beneath the owlet moon,
Trip it to the cricket's tune
 Tossing back my locks.

III

Ere the crowfoot on the lawn
 Lifts its head,
Or the glow-worm's light be gone,
 Dim and dead,
In a cobweb-hammock I
Swing between two ferns and lie
 Hid away;
Where the drowsy musk-rose blows
And a sleepy runnel flows,
In the land of Faery,
There I rock, where none can see,
 All the summer day.

AN ELF SWASHBUCKLER

Ho, my bullies, lift a tune
To Queen Mab, and, come, make merry,
By a mushroom in the moon,
White as bud of berry!

Gentlemen, come! take your grog!
Each one in his cap and mantlet:
Who refuses is a dog!—
He must lift my gantlet!

Look! my gaberdine how brave!
And my tunic, ouphen yellow!
One a bat's-wing lately gave,
And a frog its fellow.

And a moth's-head grew this fine
Feather of my beetle-bonnet;
See, my gnat-sting dagger's shine
Hath its blood still on it.

AN ELF SWASHBUCKLER

Faith! this ring I wear, I swear,
'T was Queen Mab who gave it: studded,
As you see, with rubies rare —
Eyes of spiders blooded.

Doubt me, sirs, and by my blade! —
Sirrahs, a good stabbing hanger!
From a hornet's stinger made! —
You may dread my anger!

Fill the lichen pottles up,
Honey pressed from hearts of roses:
Cheek by jowl, up with each cup,
Till we hide our noses.

Good, sirs! — Marry! — 'T was the cock! —
Hey, away! the moon's lost fire! —
Ho! the cock! our dial and clock —
Hide beneath this brier!

ON THE EVE OF ST. JOHN

(Scandinavian)

Dizzily round,
On the elf-hills, white in the mellow moonlight,
To a sweet, unholy, ravishing sound
Of wizard voices from underground,
Their mazy dance the Elle-maids wound
On St. John's Eve.

Beautiful white,
Like a wreath of mist by the starbeams kissed,
Their frail, sweet faces bloomed out of the night,
With floating tresses of firefly light,
That puffed like foam to the left and the right,
On St. John's Eve.

Fitfully there
They danced like the daughters of starlit
waters,—
But I saw what a mockery all of them were,
With their hollow bodies, when the moonlit air
Rayed out of their eyes with a glow-worm glare,
On St. John's Eve.

ON THE EVE OF ST. JOHN

I turned my feet
To the river's banks: in the rush-flowers' ranks
I heard the Necken their songs repeat:
A music all made of the water's beat,
Of moss and of whispering winds that meet,
On St. John's Eve.

They called my name;
And I saw them there, in their beauty rare,
On the moonlit waves whence the music came,
With their harps of gold, and their locks of
flame
Blown over pale brows, sans sin or blame,
On St. John's Eve.

'Twas nearing morn
When I turned me home; and a wizen'd gnome,
A Nis, all gray with flailing the corn,
And strong with the scent of byre and barn,
Scowled at me under the haunted thorn,
On St. John's Eve.

To end it all,
As I passed the hill by the ruined mill,
The hill rose up on pillars tall,
Crimson pillars that ranked a hall,
Where the Dwarfs and the Trolls were holding a
ball,

On St. John's Eve.

ON THE EVE OF ST. JOHN

One reached to me
'A goblet of gold of a vintage old,
'And I drank, and mixed with their mirth and
glee,
'And danced with them for an hour, may be.—
But they tell me now 'tis a year, you see,
Since St. John's Eve.

THE NIXIES

Deep down, beneath the waves,
Great emerald-curving caves
 Dark-domed above it,
Dim-walled with pearl and gold
Glimmers their city old —
 Hast thou heard of it? —
Where, through the long green nights, the
 spangling spars
 Twinkle like misty stars.

Where the wind-ripple rays,
And the white water sprays
 Over the rocks,
Sitting, they comb their hair;
Singing, with fingers fair
 Braiding their locks;
While round their loveliness of naked limbs
 The moon's gold glamour swims.

Or, on some stormy night,
Seen through the glow-worm light
 Haunting the sands,

THE NIXIES

Thou canst behold them drift
Wild thro' the foam, and lift
 Pale arms and hands;
Or, in the lightning's leap, along the lake,
 Dance in the tempest's wake.

Singing: "Come join our dance!
Come, while the lightnings glance,
 Or when the moon
Spills all her flowers of light
At the dark feet of night;
 And soon, ah, soon,
Within our shadowy halls thou shalt forget
 Earth's fever and its fret."

THE WATER-FAIRY

Stars above her, stars beneath,
White she rose, as white as death,
Where the waters glassed the splendor
Of a thousand thousand stars,
Twinkling where the lilies slender
Rocked above the ripple-bars.
Slow she oared a shining shoulder
To a blossom-crested boulder.
With slim fingers, long and milky,
From the wave and water-lilies,
Up the rock she drew her silky
Beauty, wild as any rill is
Flashing from a hilly height.
Sitting, dripping in the night,
Sweet she sang unto the lilies,
Sang unto the listening lilies,
Till arose the wool-white moon
In the silken hush of heaven ;
Then she wreathed her brow with seven
Lily-buds, all sweet with June ;
Belted, wreathed with lilies seven,
Then again upon the boulder,

THE WATER-FAIRY

Dark locks on a milk-white shoulder,
Wild she sang; a wilder ditty
To the wool-white moon;
To the lilies and the moon:
Beautiful and without pity,
Sang, and sang an elfin tune;
Till a youth, who wandered far,
Saw her sitting like a star;
Heard her singing to the moon;
Found her sitting, starry white,
On the flower-crested boulder,
Dark locks on a milky shoulder,
In the low moon's liliated light,
'Neath the wool-white moon. . . .
And the creature wrapped her hair
Round his white throat, sitting there
Singing, smiled into his eyes,
While she wrapped her raven hair
Slowly round his throat; and then
Laughed and whispered to the skies,
Kissed him once and then again;
Smiled; and left him stark and strangled
In the water-lilies tangled,
Staring up, with open eyes,
At the moon with open eyes.

THE MORNING-GLORIES

They swing from the garden-trellis
In Ariel-airy ease;
And their aromatic honey
Is sought by the earliest bees.

The rose, it knows their secret,
And the jessamine also knows:
And the rose told me the secret,
That the jessamine told the rose.

And the jessamine said: At midnight,
Ere the red cock woke and crew,
The Fays of Queen Titania
Came here to bathe i' the dew.

And the yellow moonlight glistened
On braids of elfin hair:
And fairy feet on the flowers
Fell lighter than any air.

THE MORNING-GLORIES

And their petticoats, gay as bubbles,
They hung up, every one,
On the morning-glory's tendrils,
Till their moonlight bath were done.

But the barn-cock crew too early,
And the Fairies fled in fear,
Leaving their petticoats, one and all,
Like blossoms hanging here.

THE GLADIOLES

As tall as the lily, as rich as the rose,
And deep as the bloom of the hollyhock,
They lift their blossoms in furbelows
Of flame that the warm winds rock.

And some are red as the humming-bird's throat,
And some are pied as the butterfly's wings,
And each is shaped like an elfin coat,
Or a goblin cap that swings.

Freaked with fire or red as blood,
They nod at me in my garden old,
Each flower a pixy helm or hood,
Lace-lined with fairyland gold.

For you know the goblins that come at dusk,—
Whose firefly eyes you have seen,— each one,
(When is sprinkled the dew and scattered the
musk,)
Hangs here his cap when done.

THE TIGER-LILY

Tall in his tawny turban,
A sultan 'mid his bands,
In my garden, old and urban,
The tiger-lily stands.

The poppies there that glisten,
Whose gaudy garments glow,
Are eunuchs who guard and listen
Round his seraglio

Of roses, myrrhed and musky;
Some whiter than a dove,
And others, deep and dusky,
His odalisks of love.

Circassian-white and slender,
His dancing-girls and slaves,
To the August-lilies tender,
His haughty hand he waves.

While he watches them, nothing missing,
In her bower of bloom on high,
His favorite rose is kissing
A Bedouin butterfly.

THE MOTH, THE ROSE, AND THE PINK

White as snow I saw it sink
On the pungent-petaled pink
 Through the moonlit dusk;
Moth? or fairy? or, who knows? —
Ghost, perhaps, of some dead rose
 'Mid the roses' musk.

Then it seemed I heard a sweet
Tinkle as of elfin feet
 Underneath the blooms,
Where one rose hung desolate,
Sick of heart and filled with hate,
 Dead with its perfumes.

“Thou, for whom I died to-day,”
So I seemed to hear it say,
 “Listen, lovely pink:
Vampire-like, unto thy heart
Now I send, through my white art,
 My pale ghost to drink.”

GLAMOUR

With fall on fall, from wood to wood,
The brook pours mossy music down —
Or is it, in the solitude,
The murmur of a Faery town?

A town of Elfland filled with bells
And holiday of hurrying feet:
Or traffic now, whose small sound swells,
Now sinks from busy street to street.

Whose Folk I often recognize
In wingéd things that hover round,
Who to men's eyes assume disguise
When on some Faery errand bound.—

The bee, that haunts the touch-me-not,
Big-bodied, making braggart din,
Is elfin brother to that sot,
Jack Falstaff of the Boar's Head Inn.

GLAMOUR

The dragon-fly, whose wings of black
Are mantle for his garb of green,
Is Ancient to this other Jack,
Another Pistol, long and lean.

The butterfly, in royal tints,
Is Hal, mad Hal in cloth of gold,
Who passes these, as once that Prince
Passed his companions boon of old.

FAERY MORRIS

I

The winds are whist ; and, hid in mist,
The moon hangs o'er the wooded height :
The bushy bee, with unkempt head,
Hath made the sunflower's disk his bed,
And sleeps half-hid from sight.
The owlet makes us melody —
Come dance with us in Faery,
Come dance with us to-night.

II

The dew is damp ; the glow-worm's lamp
Blurs in the moss its tawny light :
The great gray moth sinks, half-asleep,
Where, in an elfin-laundered heap,
The lily-gowns hang white.
The crickets make us minstrelsy —
Come dance with us in Faery,
Come dance with us to-night.

FAERY MORRIS

III

With scents of heat, dew-chilled and sweet,
The new-cut hay smells by the bight:
The ghost of some dead pansy bloom
The butterfly seems, in the gloom,
Its pied wings folded tight.

The world is drowned in fantasy —
Come dance with us in Faery,
Come dance with us to-night.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE

I

When the lily nods in slumber,
And the roses are all sleeping ;
When the night hangs deep and umber,
And the stars their watch are keeping :
When the clematis uncloses
Like a hand of snowy fire ;
And the golden-lipped primroses,
To the tiger-moths' desire,
Each a mouth of musk unpuckers —
Silken pouts of scented sweetness,
Which they sip with honey-suckers : —
Shod with hush and winged with fleetness,
You may see the Little People,
Round and round the drowsy steeple
Of a belfried hollyhock,—
Clad in phlox and four-o'-clock,
Gay of gown and pantaloon,—
Dancing by the glimmering moon,
Till the cock, the long-necked cock,
Crows them they must vanish soon.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE

II

When the cobweb is a cradle
For the dreaming dew to sleep in;
And each blossom is a ladle
That the perfumed rain lies deep in:
When the flaming fireflies scribble
Darkness as with lines flame-tragic,
And the night seems some dim sibyl
Speaking gold, or wording magic
Silent-syllabled and golden:
Capped with snapdragon and hooded
With the sweet-pea, vague-beholden,
You may see the Little People
Underneath the sleepy steeple
Of a towering mullein stock,
Trip it over moss and rock
To the owlet's elvish tune,
And the tree-toad's gnome-bassoon;
Till the cock, the barnyard cock,
Crows them they must vanish soon.

III

When the wind upon the water
Seems a boat of ray and ripple,
That some fairy moonbeam-daughter

THE LITTLE PEOPLE

Steers, with sails that drift and dripplé;
When the sound of grig and cricket,
Ever singing, ever humming,
Seems a goblin in the thicket
On his elfin viol strumming;
When the toadstool, coned and milky,
Heaves a roof for snails to clamber,
Thistledown- and milkweed-silky,
With loose locks of jade and amber,
You may see the Little People,
Underneath the pixy steeple
Of a doméd mushroom, flock,
Quaint in wildflower vest and frock,
Whirling by the waning moon
To the whippoorwill's weird tune,
Till the cock, the far-off cock,
Crows them they must vanish soon.

THE SEA-KING

In green sea-caverns dim,
Deep down,
Foam-bearded,— gray and grim
Beneath his crown,—
He sits where sea-things swim
And dead men frown.
In green sea-caverns dim
Deep down.

Around him mermaids sing,
Foam-clad,
And comb long locks and cling,
And sing so sad
Their song's wild murmuring
Drives mortals mad.
Around him mermaids sing,
Foam-clad.

There vast the sea-snakes lair
And yawn;
Great bulks cloud by; and there
Huge shells and spawn,

THE SEA-KING

Weird weeds, fantastic fair,
Drift scarlet wan.
There vast the sea-snakes lair
And yawn.

Of wrecks of ships and hulls
And bones,
Sunk gold the water dulls,
And precious stones,
Anchors, and deadmen's skulls,
He builds gaunt thrones.
Of wrecks of ships and hulls
And bones.

Men's tears are dear to him,
Deep down.
Set in the foamy rim
Of his pale crown,
Their pearléd sorrows swim
Above his frown.
Men's tears are dear to him,
Deep down.

For him no tempests sweep
And sever
The league-long waves that leap;
The sun shines never:

THE SEA-KING

In caverns vast and deep
He sits forever.
For him no tempests sweep,
Never, ah, never.

THE NEREID

I

I saw one night a Nereid white
 Arise from her coral caves :
Her sea-green curls were pale with pearls,
 And her limbs were veiled with the waves.
Through the moonlit foam I saw her come
 Up the billow-haunted shore —
And faint and sweet I heard her feet,
 Foam-like, through the surf's long roar ;
While ever the wind and the rolling waves
Kept time to her song of ocean caves,
That she sang to her harp of mist and moon,
Of moonbeam shell : this ocean tune : —

II

“ Come follow, come follow, to caverns hollow,
 That sound with the sighing sea !
Come follow me o'er the waters hoar ! —
 Come away, come away with me !
Come follow, oh, follow, to grottoes hollow,
 And caves that are ocean-whist,

THE NEREID

Where the sea-weeds twine and the star-fish
shine,

And the rosy corals twist.

“Come follow me home on the wandering foam,
That rolls my world above!

My bosom shall bear thee safely where
The Sea-nymphs dream of love.

They will lie at thy feet and thy heart shall
beat

To the music of their sighs;
They will lean to thy face and, like stars, thou
shalt trace

Their radiant, love-lit eyes.

“Come away, come away! where, under the
spray,

The haliôtis glows,
The nautilus gleams and the sponge-grove
dreams,

And the crimson dulse like sunset streams,
And the coral-forest grows.

Come away to my caves, my emerald caves,
From the moon and the sun deep hid!
Forget the world, down under the waves,—
The world of man that sighs and slaves,—
Forget the world, there under the waves,
In the arms of a Nereid!”

THE MERMAID

The moon in the east was glowing
When I sought the moaning sea ;
The winds from the sea were blowing,
And they brought strange dreams to me.

The waves at my feet were breaking ;
The stars in the sky were wan ;
And I watched a white mist making
For the shore and glimmering on.

And was it a sound of wailing
That the sea-wind bore to me ?
Did I hear a footstep trailing ?
Or was it a wave of the sea ?

The night hung pale above me
Upon her starry throne,
And a voice said, " Youth, come love me !
For my heart for thee makes moan."

THE MERMAID

And out of the mist came slipping
A mermaid, tall and fair;
Her limbs with sea-dew dripping,
And moonlight in her hair.

Her locks, with the salt sea dripping,
She wrung with a snowy hand;
Her gown hung, thinly clipping
Her breasts the sea-wind fanned.

Amort from the sea came speeding
This creature samite-clad;
And my heart for her was bleeding,
But its beating I forbade.

On the strand where the sand was rocking
She stood and sang an air;
And the winds in her hair kept locking
Their fingers cool and bare.

Soft in her arms did she fold me,
And evermore she moaned,
While her love and her grief she told me,
And the ocean sighed and groaned.

But I stilled my heart's wild beating,
For I knew her love was dim;

THE MERMAID

Oh, cold, oh, cold was my greeting,
Though my love burnt in each limb.

To her bosom white she pressed me
With arms of foam and mist ;
With her arms and her lips caressed me,
And smiled in my eyes and kissed.

But ever I kept repeating,
“ A mermaid false is she ! ”
And cold, oh, cold was my greeting,
Though the heart beat wild in me.

To my ears she laid her sighing
Sweet mouth, like a rosy shell ;
Her arms round my neck were lying,
And her bosom rose and fell.

With her kisses soft did she woo me,
But I hushed my heart's wild beat ;
With her lips and her eyes did she sue me,
But met in my own defeat.

With the cloud of her sea-dipped tresses
She veiled her beautiful face —
And, oh, how I longed for her kisses,
And sighed for her soft embrace !

THE MERMAID

But out in the mist she went wailing
When dawn besilvered the night,
Her robes of samite trailing
The foam-flowers, sad and white.

Like a spirit lost went sighing
In the twilight over the sea;
And it seemed the night was crying —
Or was it the heart in me?

Then she turned to me and, weeping,
Faded into the night;
And I saw the wild waves leaping
Under the haunted height.

I heard a far-off sobbing,
A sound of agony —
Oh, was it the ocean throbbing?
Or was it the heart in me?

But I hushed my heart's wild beating,
With "a mermaid false is she!"
While ever I kept repeating,
"Would she 'd return to me!"

Oh, heart, so full of yearning
For a loveliness that 's gone,
A beauty unreturning,
Be still! or break with dawn!

CHILDREN O' THE MOON

I

To-night, perhaps, after the rain is done,
Led by a moonbeam or the flickering torch
The firefly flares, amid the loneliness,
The hereditary loneliness of the trees,
I, too, may see,— as sees the star that peeps
Through interlacing boughs, the toadstools heave
Their white roofs through the ferns, like goblin
 huts,
An elfin town; and, squatting on their tops,
Punch-bellied things, peak-kneed, their knees up-
 drawn
To perpendicular eyes of glow-worm flame,
'And arms akimbo i' the light o' the moon,
Watching the dew-drops tag the toadstools' rims,
Or from the mushroom roll the orbéd rain:
Or, where the tall weed drips and spunkwood
 smells
Make musk the underwoods, slim woodland
 imps,—

CHILDREN O' THE MOON

Snail-eyed, frog-footed,—oust the sleeping bees
From rocking cradles of the wild flowers' bells
Belfrying, with foxglove-purple, a moonbeam
space.

II

On the road in the April wood,
Under the oaks I stopped and stood,
Watching the mole that stealthily heaved
The soft loose clay of its barrow:
The oaks above were auburn-leaved;
And near me bloomed the yarrow;
When down from a leaf a gray snail fell,
Its long stilt-eyes thrust out of its shell:
And I thought, "This color is worn of the fays,
Whose fashion runs to dimmish grays:
A snail-brown tunic each elfin eunuch
Wears in the harem the Elf King keeps:
And a snail-gray gown each fairy clown
Dons when the elf dance whirls and leaps
In the light of the moon on the upland down.
A snail-shell house for his ousphen spouse
Each elfin builds by the snail-white moon,
Where his fairykin love he boards and beds,
Under the dandelion's wisp-white heads,
Where ever he pipes his cricket tune.

CHILDREN O' THE MOON

III

The sphinx-moth, clothed in downy hues,
In woolly whites and fawns and blues,
Goes fluttering through the evening dews.

Above the nicotiana's blooms'
Narcotic horns it waves its plumes,
Made drowsy with the drugged perfumes.

It seems some Fairy Queen who goes
'Mid trumpets lifted in long rows
Of white whereon the Elfworld blows.

Attendant and triumphant strains
Of fragrance, greeting her who reigns,
Who takes the air in fairy lanes
Of flowers, that the moonlight stains.

A MOTIVE IN GOLD AND GRAY.

I

To-night he sees their star bead, dewy bright,
Deep in the pansy, eve hath made for it,
Low in the west — a placid purple lit
At its far edge with warm auroral light:
Love's planet hangs above a cedared height;
And there in shadow, like gold music writ
Of dusk's dark fingers, scale-like fireflies flit
Now up, now down the balmy bars of night.
How different from that eve a year ago!
Which was a stormy flower in the hair
Of dolorous day, whose sombre eyes looked
 blurred
Into night's sibyl face, and saw the woe
Of parting here, and imaged a despair,
As now a hope caught from a homing word.

II

She came unto him — as the springtime does
Unto the land where all lies dead and cold,
Until her rosary of days is told

A MOTIVE IN GOLD AND GRAY

And beauty, prayer-like, blossoms where death
was.—

Nature divined her coming; yea, the dusk
Seemed thinking of that happiness: behold,
No cloud it had to blot its marigold
Moon — great and golden — o'er the slopes of
musk;

Whereon earth's voice made music; tree and
stream

Lilting the same low lullaby again,
To coax the wind, who romped among the hills
All day — a tired child — to sleep and dream:
When through the moonlight of the locust-lane
She came, as spring comes through her daffodils.

III

White as a lily molded of Earth's milk
That eve the moon bloomed in a hyacinth sky;
Soft in the gleaming glens the wind went by,
Faint as a phantom clothed in unseen silk:
Bright as a Naiad's limbs, from shine to shade
The runnel twinkled through the shaken brier;
Above the hills one long cloud, pulsed with fire,
Flashed like a great enchantment-welded blade.
And when the western sky seemed some weird
land,

A MOTIVE IN GOLD AND GRAY

And night a witch's spell, at whose command
One sloping star fell green from heav'n; and
 deep
The warm rose opened, for the moth to sleep;
Then she, consenting, laid her hands in his,
And lifted up her lips for their first kiss.

IV

There where they part the porch's steps are
 strewn
With wind-dropped petals of the purple vine;
Athwart the porch the shadow of a pine
Cleaves the white moonlight; and, like some calm
 rune
Heaven says to Earth, shines the majestic moon;
And now a meteor draws a lilac line
Across the welkin, as if God would sign
The perfect poem of this night of June.
The wood-wind stirs the flowering chestnut-tree,
Whose curving blossoms strew the glimmering
 grass
Like crescents that wind-wrinkled waters glass;
And, like a moonstone in a frill of flame,
The dewdrop trembles in the peony,
As in a lover's heart his sweetheart's name.

A MOTIVE IN GOLD AND GRAY

V

In after years shall she stand here again,
In heart regretful? and with lonely sighs
Think on that night of love, and realize
Whose was the fault whence grew the parting
 pain?

And, in her soul, persuading still in vain,
Shall doubt take shape, and all its old surmise
Bid darker phantoms of remorse arise
Trailing the raiment of a dead disdain?
Masks, unto whom shall her avowal yearn
With looks clairvoyant, seeing how each is
A different form with eyes and lips that burn
Into her heart with love's last look and kiss? —
And, ere they pass, shall she behold them turn
To her a face which evermore is his?

VI

In after years shall he remember how
Dawn had no breeze sweet as her murmured
 name?
And day no sunlight that availed the same
As her bright smile or beauty of her brow?
Nor had the conscious twilight's golds and grays
Her soul's allurement, that was free from
 blame,—

A MOTIVE IN GOLD AND GRAY

Nor dusk's advances, soft with starry flame,
More young bewitchment than her own sweet
ways.—

Then as the night with moonlight and perfume,
And dew and darkness, qualifies the whole
Dim world with glamour, shall the past with
dreams —

That were the love-theme of their lives — illumine
The present with remembered hours, with
gleams,

Long lost to him, that bring them soul to soul?

VII

No! not for her and him that part — the Might-
Have-Been's sad consolation! where had bent,
Haply, in prayer and patience penitent,
Both, though apart, before no blown-out light.
The otherwise of fate for them, when white
The lilacs bloom again, and, innocent,
Spring comes with beauty for her testament,
Singing the praises of the day and night.
When orchards blossom and the distant hill
Is pale with haw-trees as a ridge with mist,
The moon shall see him where a watch he keeps
By her young form that lieth white and still,
With lidded eyes and passive wrist on wrist,
While by her side he bows himself and weeps.

A MOTIVE IN GOLD AND GRAY

VIII

What pain for him to see the blooms appear
Of haw and dogwood in the spring again;
The primrose dragging with its weight of rain,
And hill-sloped orchards swarming far and near.
To see the old fields, that her steps made dear,
Grow green with deepening plenty of the grain,
Yet feel how this excess of life is vain,—
How vain to him! — since she no more is here.
What though the woodland bourgeon, water
 flow,
Like a rejoicing harp, beneath the boughs!
The cat-bird and the oriole arouse
Day with the impulsive music of their love!
Beneath the graveyard sod she will not know,
Nor what his heart is all too conscious of!

IX

How bless'd is he who, gazing in the tomb,
Can yet behold beneath the investing mask
Of mockery,— whose horror seems to ask
Sphinx-riddles of the soul within the gloom,—
Upon dead lips no dust of Love's dead bloom;
And in dead hands no shards of Faith's rent
 flask;

A MOTIVE IN GOLD AND GRAY

But Hope, who still stands at her starry task,
Weaving the web of promise on her loom!
Thrice bless'd! who, 'though he hear the tomb
 proclaim
How all is Death's and Life Death's other name,
Can yet reply: "O Grave, these things are
 yours!
But that is left which life indeed assures —
Love, through whose touch I shall arise the
 same!
Love, of whose self was wrought the universe!"

INTIMATIONS

I

Is it uneasy moonlight,
 On the restless field, that stirs?
Or wild white meadow-blossoms
 The night-wind bends and blurs?

Is it the dolorous water,
 That sobs in the wood and sighs?
Or heart of an ancient oak-tree,
 That breaks and, sighing, dies?

The wind is vague with the shadows
 That wander in No-Man's-Land;
The water is dark with the voices
 That weep on the Unknown's strand.

O ghosts of the winds that call me!
 O ghosts of the whispering waves!
Sad as forgotten flowers
 That die upon nameless graves!

INTIMATIONS

What is this thing you tell me
In tongues of a twilight race,
Of death, with the vanished features,
Mantled, of my own face?

II

The old enigmas of the deathless dawns,
And riddles of the all immortal eves,—
That still o'er Delphic lawns
Speak as the gods spoke through oracular
leaves —

I read with new-born eyes,
Remembering how, a slave,
They buried me, a living sacrifice,
Once in a dead king's grave.

Or, crowned with hyacinth and helichrys,
How, towards the altar in the marble gloom,—
Hearing the magadis

Dirge through the pale amaracine perfume,—
'Mid chanting priests I trod,
With never a sigh or pause,
To give my life to pacify a god,
And save my country's cause.

Again: Cyrenian roses on wild hair,
And oil and purple smeared on breasts and
cheeks,

INTIMATIONS

How, with mad torches there,—
 Reddening the cedars of Cithæron's peaks,—
With gesture and fierce glance,
 Lascivious Mænad bands
Once drew and slew me in the Pyrrhic dance
 With Bacchanalian hands.

III

The music now that lays
 Dim lips against my ears,
Some far-off thing it says,—
 Unto my soul,—of years
Long passed into the haze
 Of tears.

Meseems before me are
 The dark eyes of a queen,
A queen of Istakhar:
 I seem to see her lean
More lovely than a star
 Of mien.

A slave, I stand before
 Her jeweled throne; I kneel,
And, in a song, once more
 My love for her reveal;

INTIMATIONS

How once I did adore
I feel.

'Again her dark eyes gleam;
Again her red lips smile;
And in her face the beam
Of love that knows no guile;
And so she seems to dream
A while.

Out of her deep hair then
A rose she takes — and I
Am made a god 'mid men!
Her rose, that here did lie
When I, in th' wild-beasts' den,
Did die.

IV

Old paintings on its wainscots,
And, in its oaken hall,
Old arras; and the twilight
Of sorrow over all.

Old grandeur on its stairways;
And in its haunted rooms
Old souvenirs of greatness,
And ghosts of dead perfumes.

INTIMATIONS

The winds are phantom voices
 Around its carven doors ;
The moonbeams, specter footsteps
 Upon its polished floors.

Old cedars build around it
 A solitude of sighs ;
And the old hours pass through it
 With immemorial eyes.

But more than this I know not ;
 Nor where the house may be ;
Nor what its ancient secret
 And ancient grief to me.

It seems my soul remembers,—
 Of which this house is part,—
Once, in a former lifetime,
 'T was here I broke my heart.

V

In eons of the senses,
 My spirit knew of yore,
I found the Isle of Circe
 And felt her magic lore ;
And still the soul remembers
 What I was once before.

INTIMATIONS

She gave me flowers to smell of
That wizard branches bore,
Of weird and wondrous beauty,
Whose stems dripped human gore —
Their scent when I remember
I know that world once more.

She gave me fruits to eat of
That grew beside the shore,
Of necromantic ripeness,
With human flesh at core —
Their taste when I remember
I know that life once more.

And then, behold! a serpent,
That glides my face before,
With eyes of tears and fire
That glare me o'er and o'er —
I look into its eyeballs,
And know myself once more.

VI

I have looked in the eyes of Poesy,
And sat in Song's high place;
And the beautiful Spirits of Music
Have spoken me face to face;

INTIMATIONS

Yet here in my soul there is sorrow
They never can name or trace.

I have walked with the glamour Gladness,
And dreamed with the shadow Sleep;
And the presences, Love and Knowledge,
Have smiled in my heart's red keep;
Yet here in my soul there is sorrow
For the depth of their gaze too deep.

The love and the hope God grants me,
The beauty that lures me on,
And the dreams of folly and wisdom
That thoughts of the spirit don,
Are but masks of an ancient sorrow
Of a life long dead and gone.

Was it sin? or a crime forgotten?
Of a love that loved too well?
That sat on a throne of fire
A thousand years in Hell?
That the soul with its nameless sorrow
Remembers but can not tell?

SELF AND SOUL

It came to me in my sleep,
And I rose in my sleep and went
Out in the night to weep,
Out where the trees were bent.
With my soul, it seemed, I stood
Alone in a wind-swept wood.

And my soul said, gazing at me,
“I will show you another land
Different from that you see,”
And took into hers my hand.—
We passed from the wood to a heath
As starved as the ribs of Death.

There, every leaf and the grass
Was a thorn or a thistle hoar,
The rocks rose mass on mass,
Black bones on an iron moor.
And my soul said, looking at me,
“The past of your life you see.”

SELF AND SOUL

And a swineherd passed with his swine,
Deformed, with the face of an owl;
Two eyes of a wolfish shine
Burned under his eyebrows foul.
And my soul said, "This is the Lust,
That soils my beauty with dust."

Then a goose-wife hobbled by,
On a crutch, with the devil's geese,
A-mumbling that God is a lie,
And cursing the world without cease.
And my soul said, "This is Unfaith
Who maketh me that which she saith."

Then we came to a garden, close
To a hollow of graves and tombs;
A garden as red as a rose,
Hung over of obscene glooms;
The heart of each rose was a spark
That smouldered or glared in the dark.

And I was aware of a girl
With a wild-rose face, who came,
With a mouth like a shell's split pearl,
Rose-clad in a robe of flame;
And she plucked the roses and gave,
And I was her veriest slave.

SELF AND SOUL

She vanished. My lips would have kissed
The flowers she gave me with sighs,
But they writhed from my hands and hissed,
In their hearts were a serpent's eyes.
And my soul said, "Pleasure is she.
The joys of the flesh you see."

Then I bowed with a heart too weary,
That longed to rest, to sleep;
And it seemed in the darkness dreary
I heard my sad heart weep;
And my soul to the silence say,—
"O God! for the break of day!"

THE OLD HOUSE BY THE MERE

Five rotting gables look upon
 A garden rank with flowers and weeds;
Old iron gates on posts of stone,
 From which the grass-grown roadway leads.
Five rotting gable-points appear
 Above bleak yews and cedars sad,
Beneath which lies the sleepy mere
 In lazy lilies clad.

At morn the slender dragon-fly,
 A living ray of light, darts past;
The burly bee comes charging by
 Winding a surly blast.
At noon amid the fervid leaves
 The insects quarrel, harsh and hot;
In bitter briers the spider weaves
 A web with silver shot.

At eve the hermit cricket rears
 A plaintive prayer, and creaks and creaks;
The bat, like some wing'd elfin, veers
 Beneath the sunset's streaks.

THE OLD HOUSE BY THE MERE

The caterpillar gnaws the leaf ;
The mottled toad croaks drowsily ;
And then the owl, like some dark grief,
Cries in the old beech-tree.

At night the blistering dew comes down
And lies as white as autumn frost
Upon the green, upon the brown —
You'd think each bush a ghost.
The crescent moon sheathes its white sword
Within a cloud ; and, gray with fear,
One large blue star keeps stealthy guard
Above the house and mere.

The livid lilies rotting lie
On oozy beds of weltering leaves ;
The will-o'-wisps go flickering by,—
And then the water heaves,
And, like some monstrous blossom there,
A maiden's corpse with staring eyes,
And naked breast and raven hair,
Slow in the mere doth rise.

And when the clock of some far town
Knells midnight, in that house of sins,
In haunted chambers, up and down,
The dance of death begins ;

THE OLD HOUSE BY THE MERE

And stiff, stiff silks sweep, rustling,
And stately satins none may see ;
And then soft sounds of music ring
In wildest melody.

And through the halls the demon dance
Whirls onward ; and dark corridors
Resound with song and feet that glance
Along the falling floors.
Then suddenly, as if in fear,
The music ends, the dance is done ;
And booming over house and mere
A far-off clock strikes one.

IN AN OLD GARDEN

The autumn glory fades
 Upon the withered trees;
And over all the dead leaves fall
 And whisper in the breeze.

The violets are dead,
 And dead the hollyhocks,
That hang like rags by the wind-crushed flags
 And tiger-lily stocks.

The wild gourd clambers free
 Where the clematis was wont;
Where nenuphars bloomed thick as stars
 Rank weeds fill up the fount.

Yet, as in dreams, I hear
 A tinkling mandolin
In the dark-blue light of a fragrant night
 Float in and out and in.

IN AN OLD GARDEN

Till the dewy vine, that climbs
To a casement's lattice, sways;
And behind the vine, like stars that shine,
Two dark eyes gleam and gaze.

And now a perfume comes,
A swift Favonian gust;
And the shrivelled grass, where it doth pass,
Bows worshiping to the dust.

I seem to see her drift
From tree to moonlit tree,
In her jewelled shawl divinely tall,
A mist of drapery.

And one awaits her there
By the broken Psyche old;
And there they stand, pale hand in hand,
Her thin wrists hooped with gold.

But a wind sweeps overhead,
And the frosty leaves are strewn —
And nothing is there but a bough, blown bare,
And the light of the ghostly moon.

THE HAUNTED ROOM

Its casements, diamond-disk'd with glass,
Look down upon a terrace old,
Where urns, unkempt with ragged grass,
Foam o'er with hoary cold.
The snow rounds out each stair of stone;
The frozen fount is hooped with pearl;
Down desolate walks, like phantoms blown,
Thin, powdery snow-wreaths whirl.

And to each rose-tree's stem, that bends
With silvery snow-combs, glued with frost,
It seems each summer rosebud sends
Its airy, scentless ghost.
A stiff Elizabethan pile,
With bleakness chattering in its panes,
Where, rumbling down each chimney-file,
The mad wind shakes his reins.

.

THE HAUNTED ROOM

Lone in the northern angle, dim
With immemorial dust, it lies;
Where each gaunt casement's stony rim
Stares eyelike at the skies.
Drear in the old pile's oldest wing,
Hung round with mouldering arras, where
Tall, shadowy Tristrams fight and sing
For shadowy Isolts fair.

Beside a crumbling cabinet
A tarnished lute lies on the floor;
A talon-footed chair is set,
Grotesquely, near the door.
A carven, testered bedstead stands
With rusty silks draped all about;
And, like a moon in murky lands,
A mirror glimmers out.

Neglected, locked that chamber, where
In dropping arras dimly clings
The drowsy moth; and, frightened there,
The lost wind sighs and sings
Adown the roomy flue, and takes
And swings the ghostly mirror till
It seems some unseen hand that shakes
Its frame then leaves it still.

THE HAUNTED ROOM

A starving mouse forever gnaws
Behind a panel; and the vines,
That on the casement tap like claws,
Lattice the floor with lines.—
I have been there when blades of light
Stabbed each dull, stained, and dusty pane;
Once I was there at dead of night —
I dream of it again. . . .

She grew upon my vision as
Heat grows that haunts the summer day;
In taffetas, like glimmering glass,
She stood there dim and gray.
And will-o'-wisp-like jewels bound
Faint points of light round neck and wrist;
And round her slender waist was wound
A zone of silver mist.

And icy as some winter land
Her pale, still face; o'er which the night
Hung of her raven hair; her hand
Was beautiful and white.
Before the mirror moaningly
She wrung her hands and palely pressed
Her brow.— And did I dream, or see,
That blood was on her breast?

THE HAUNTED ROOM

And then she vanished.— Like a breath,

That o'er the limpid glass had passed,
Her presence passed; and cold as death

She left me and aghast.

Yes, I've been there when spears of light

Pierced thro' each stained and sunlit pane;

Once I was there at dead of night —

I dream of it again.

THE MIRROR

An ancient mirror hangs
 Within an ancient Hall;
In a lonely room where th' arrased gloom
 Scowls from the pictured wall.

A mystic mirror, framed
 In ebon, wildy carved,
That seems to stare on the shadows there,
 Like something lean and starved.

A mirror, where one sees
 In the broad, good light of day,
Like crimson torches, at the window arches,
 Red roses swing and sway.

And a part o' the garth is seen,
 With its quaint stone-dial plate,
That, gray and old, green-stained with
 mold,
 Stands near the lioned gate.

THE MIRROR

These it reflects all day,
And at night one star of blue,
That the nightingale, where the rose is pale,
Lifts its passionate love-song to.

The nightbird sings below;
The stars hang bright above;
And the roses soon in the sultry moon
Shall palpitate with love.

The nightbird sobs below;
The roses blow and bloom;
Through mullioned panes the moonlight
rains
In the dim, unholy room.

Grim ancestors that stare,—
Stiff, starched and haughty,— down
From the oaken wall of the noble hall,
Put on a sterner frown.

The old, hoarse castle-clock
Coughs midnight overhead —
And the rose is wan and the bird is gone
When walk the shrouded dead.

Then from their frames, it seems,
The portraits' shadows flit;

THE MIRROR

By the mirror there they stand and stare
And weep or sigh to it.

In rare rich ermine, earls
And knights in gold and vair,
With a rapiered throng of courtiers long
Pass with a stately stare.

With jewels and perfumes,
In powder, ruff, and lace,
Tall ladies pass by the looking-glass
Each sighing at her face.

What secret does it hide,
This mirror, gaunt and tall,
In this lonely room, where th' arrased gloom
Scowls from the pictured wall?

THE HALL OF DARKNESS

Within her veins it beats
And burns within her brain,
As year by year more sad and sear
Grow barren hill and plain.

Ah! over young is she
Who bears within her breast
More pain and woe than women know,
And all of love's unrest.

Seven towers of shaggy rock
Rise black to ragged skies,
From out a fen where bones of men
Stare with their empty eyes.

Eternal sunset pours,
Around its warlock towers,—
From out its urn of beams that burn,—
Long fire-cloudy flowers.

THE HALL OF DARKNESS

On bat-like turrets high,
And owlet battlements,
Huge condors dream and vultures scream
As at the battle's scents.

Within the banquet-hall,
A bride, rich-robed and pale,
She sits at board with men o' the sword
Cased all in silver mail.

Their visors barred are drawn ;
Their hands are gauntletéd ;
And one, behold ! in glittering gold
Sits at the table's head.

Wild music echoes through
The hollow-sounding air —
It seems, at least, a wedding feast
With richness everywhere.

Wild music oozes from
The ceiling, groined with white
Pure pearl, and floors, like mythic shores,
Of limpid chrysolite.

Silent they sit at feast,
And she, whom he sits near,—

THE HALL OF DARKNESS

He in gold mail,— why is she pale,
As one with grief and fear?

The heav'ns grow slaughter-red,
Grow blood-red west and east;
Seven casements high that frame the sky
Flare on the blood-red feast.

Gaunt torches tall they seem,
Red revel-torches seven;—
And then, behold! the hour is tolled;
A great bell strikes eleven.

Silence.— The light, that makes
Each plate a splash of fire,—
Gold-splintered,— dims; and softer swims
The music of each lyre.

Grave Silence, like a king,
At that strange feast has place;
Grave Silence still as God's own will
Within the deeps of space.

She leans to him in gold,
And to him seems to say—
“The night grows late, my love! Why wait?
Ah God! would it were day!

THE HALL OF DARKNESS

“Would it were day, ah God!
How long is it till dawn?—
Why wear this mask?—Undo thy casque!
The midnight hour comes on!”

Silent he sits, severe;
Then one sonorous tower,
Owl-swarmed, that looms in glaring glooms,
Tolls slow the midnight hour.

Three strokes; the knights arise,
The silence from them flung,
Like waves that mock some hoarse sea-rock,
Wild laughter moves each tongue.

Six strokes; and wailing out
The music hoots away;
The fiery glimmer of heaven grows dimmer,
The red turns ghostly gray.

Nine strokes; and, dropping mold,
The crumbling Hall is lead;
The plate is rust; the feast is dust;
The banqueters are dead.

Twelve strokes pound out and roll;
The vast Hall heaves and waves

THE HALL OF DARKNESS

With things that crawl from floor and wall —
Spawn of a thousand graves.

Then rattling in the night
His golden visor slips —
In rotting mail a death's-head pale
Kisses her loathing lips.

Then over all a voice
Crying above the strife —
“Death is the Groom: this Hall, the Tomb:
The Bride, behold, is Life!”

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

I have lain for an hour or twain
Awake, and the tempest is beating
On the roof and the sleet on the pane,
And the winds are three enemies meeting;
And I listen and hear it again,
My name, in the silence, repeating.

Then dumbness of death; and, moon-gray,
In the darkness a light like a bubble,
From which, like a single white ray,
Comes a woman in loveliness double;
Her face is the breaking of day,
Her eyes are the night and its trouble.

I move not; she lies with her lips
At mine; and I feel she is drawing
My life from my heart to their tips,
My heart where the horror is gnawing;
My life in a hundred slow sips,
My soul with her gaze overawing.

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

She binds me with merciless eyes;
She drinks of my blood; and I hear it
Drain up with a shudder and rise
To the lips, like a serpent's, that steer it;
And she lies, and she laughs as she lies,
Saying, "Lo! thy affinitized spirit."

I pray — and a gate, as of swords,—
'Mid torments and tortures huge-grated,
Clangs iron deep under; and words
Are heard as of sins that awaited
A fiend who lashed into their hordes,
And a demon who lacerated.

I pray — and lie clammy and stark,
As a something mounts higher and higher,
Up, out of damnation and dark,
With hobbling of hoofs that is dire;
A devil, whose breath is a spark,
Whose face is of filth and of fire.

"To thy body's corruption! thy grave!
Thy hell! from which thou hast stolen!"
He snarls; and the night, like a wave,
Engulfs them with darkness wild swollen.—
Can it be that in sleep I'm a slave
Of a thing neither flesh nor eidolon?

THAT HOUR

When she was dead, a voice — she knew not
whose —

Said to her: "Soul that fell,
To cheer thee there in Hell,
Of all thy life's lost happiness now choose.

"Ask what thou wilt, thou, who hast walked
'mid flowers
And songs the easy way
Of pleasure day by day,
Ask what thou wilt of all thy lived-out hours."

.

And then she thought: "Oh, shall it be when
there,
A blameless maiden, I,
Dreaming, watched love draw nigh,
And felt his kiss rose-sweet on mouth and
hair?"

THAT HOUR

“Or shall it be when, that white night, his
fingers

Smoothed from my brow the curls,
And fell, like unstrung pearls,
His words of passionate love whose memory
lingers?

“Or shall it be when over earth and sea
I heard the sweet unrest
Within his ardent breast,
His heart that beat alone for me, for me?

“Or shall it be when, in his belting arms,
Soul gazed on kindred soul,
And love had won the goal
Of his desire, and his were all my charms?

“No! no! not these! that hour he left me lost!
Stunned, fallen and despised
Before the world he prized,
When — God forgive me! — when I loved him
most!”

EPILOGUE

Beyond the moon, within a land of mist,
Lies the dim Garden of all Dead Desires,
Walled round with morning's clouded amethyst,
And haunted of the sunset's shadowy fires;
There all lost things we loved hold ghostly
tryst —

Dead dreams, dead hopes, dead loves, and
dead desires.

Sad are the stars that day and night exist
Above the Garden of all Dead Desires;
And sad the roses that within it twist
Deep bow'rs; and sad the wind that through
it quires;

But sadder far are they who there hold tryst —
Dead dreams, dead hopes, dead loves, and
dead desires.

There, like a dove upon the twilight's wrist,—
Soft in the Garden of all Dead Desires,—

EPILOGUE

Sleep broods; and there, where never a serpent
hissed,

On the wan willows music hangs her lyres,
Æolian dials by which phantoms tryst —

Dead dreams, dead hopes, dead loves, and
dead desires.

There you shall hear low voices; kisses kissed,

Faint in the Garden of all Dead Desires,

By lips the anguish of vain song makes whist;

And meet with shapes that art's despair at-
tires;

And gaze in eyes where all sweet sorrows
tryst —

Dead dreams, dead hopes, dead loves, and
dead desires.

Thither we go, dreamer and realist,

Bound for the Garden of all Dead Desires,

Where we shall find, perhaps, all Life hath
missed,

All Life hath longed for when the soul aspires;

All Earth's elusive loveliness at tryst —

Dead dreams, dead hopes, dead loves, and
dead desires.

POEMS OF MYTH AND
ROMANCE

TO
MY FRIEND
WILLIAM WARWICK THUM

PROEM

*There is no rhyme that is half so sweet
As the song of the wind in the rippling wheat;
There is no metre that 's half so fine
As the lilt of the brook under rock and vine;
And the loveliest lyric I ever heard
Was the wildwood strain of a forest bird.—
If the wind and the brook and the bird would
teach
My heart their beautiful parts of speech,
And the natural art that they say these with,
My soul would sing of beauty and myth
In a rhyme and a metre that none before
Have sung in their love, or dreamed in their lore,
And the world would be richer one poet the
more.*

MYTH AND ROMANCE

I

When I go forth to greet the glad-faced Spring,
Just at the time of opening apple-buds,
When brooks are laughing, winds are whisper-
ing,

On babbling hillsides, or in warbling woods,
There is an unseen presence that eludes:—
Perhaps a Dryad, in whose tresses cling
The loamy odors of old solitudes,
Who from her beechen doorway calls, and leads
My soul to follow; now with dimpling words
Of leaves; and now with syllables of birds;
While here and there—is it her limbs that
swing?

Or restless sunlight on the moss and weeds?

II

Or, haply 't is a Naiad now who slips,
Like some white lily, from her fountain's glass,
While from her dripping hair and breasts and
hips

MYTH AND ROMANCE

The moisture rains cool music on the grass.
Her have I heard and followed, yet, alas!
Have seen no more than the wet ray that dips
The shivered waters, wrinkling where I pass;
But in the liquid light, where she doth hide,
I have beheld the azure of her gaze
Smiling; and, where the orbing ripple plays,
Among her minnows I have heard her lips,
Bubbling, make merry by the waterside.

III

Or now it is an Oread — whose eyes
Are constellated dusk — who stands confessed,
As naked as a flow'r; her heart's surprise,
Like morning's rose, mantling her brow and
breast:
She, shrinking from my presence, all dis-
tressed
Stands for a startled moment ere she flies,
Her deep hair blowing, up the mountain crest,
Wild as a mist that trails along the dawn.
And is 't her footfalls lure me? or the sound
Of airs that stir the crisp leaf on the ground?
And is 't her body glimmers on yon rise?
Or dogwood blossoms snowing on the lawn?

MYTH AND ROMANCE

IV

Now 't is a Satyr piping serenades

On a slim reed. Now Pan and Faun advance

Beneath green-hollowed roofs of forest glades,

Their feet gone mad with music: now, perchance,

Sylvanus sleeping, on whose leafy trance

The Nymphs stand gazing in dim ambuscades

Of sun-embodied perfume.— Myth, Romance,

Where'er I turn, reach out bewildering arms,

Compelling me to follow. Day and night

I hear their voices and behold the light

Of their divinity that still evades,

And still allures me in a thousand forms.

REVERIE

What ogive gates from gold of Ophir wrought,
What walls of Parian, whiter than a rose,
What towers of crystal, for the eyes of thought,
Hast builded on dim Islands of Repose?
Thy cloudy columns, vast, Corinthian,
Or huge, Ionic, colonnade the heights
Of Dreamland, looming o'er the soul's deep
seas;

Piled melodies of marble, that no man
Has ever reached, except in fancy's flights,
Templing the presence of perpetual ease.

Oft, where o'er plastic frieze and plinths of
spar,—

In glimmering solitudes of pillared stone,—
The twilight blossoms with one violet star,
With thee, O Reverie, I have stood alone,
And there beheld, from out the Mythic Age,
The rosy breasts of Cytherea — fair,
Full-cestused, and suggestive of what loves

REVERIE

Immortal! —rise; and heard the lyric rage
Of sunburnt Poesy, whose throat breathes
bare
O'er leopard skins, fluting among his groves.

Oft, where thy castled peaks and templed vales
Cloud — like convulsive sunsets — shores that
dream,

Myrrh-fragrant, over siren seas whose sails
Gleam white as lilies on a lilled stream,
My soul has stood. Or by thy sapphire sea,
In thy arcaded gardens, in the shade
Of breathing sculpture, oft has walked with
thought,

And bent, in shadowy attitude, its knee
Before the shrine of Beauty that must fade
And leave no memory of the mind that
wrought.

Who hath beheld thy caverns where, in heaps,
The wine of Lethe and Love's witchery,
In sealéd amphoræ a sibyl keeps?
World-old, a grape filled with the soul of thee.
No wine of Xeres or of Syracuse!
No fine Falernian and no vile Sabine!
The stolen fire of a demigod,

REVERIE

Whose bubbled purple heavenly feet did bruise
In crusted vats of vintage, when the green
Flamed into autumn, on the Samian sod.

Oh, for the deep enchantment of one draught!

The reckless ecstasy of classic earth! —

To make me godlike as the gods that laughed

In eyes of mortal brown, a mighty mirth

Of deity delirious with desire!

To make me one with roses of the shrines,

The splashing wine-libation or the blood,

And all the young priest's dreaming! To in-
spire

My very soul with beauty till it shines

Star-like amid life's starry brotherhood!

Would I might slumber in the old-world shades,

Where poesy could touch me, as some bold

Wild-bee a pulpy lily of the glades,

Barbaric-covered with the kernalled gold;

And feel the glory of the Golden Age

Less godly than my purpose, strong to dare

Death with the young immortal lips of Love:

Less lovely than my soul's ideal rage

To mate itself with Music and declare

Itself part meaning of the stars above.

LETHE

I

There is a scent of roses and spilt wine
Between the moonlight and the laurel-coppice ;
The marble idol glimmers on its shrine,
White as a star, among a heaven of poppies.
Here all my life lies like a spilth of wine.
There is a mouth of music like a lute,
A nightingale that singeth to one flower ;
Between the falling flower and the fruit,
Where love hath died, the music of an hour.

II

To sit alone with memory and a rose ;
To dwell with shadows of whilom romances ;
To make one hour of a year of woes
And walk on starlight, in ethereal trances,
With love's lost face fair as a moon-white rose.
To shape from music and the scent of buds
Love's spirit and its presence of sweet fire,
Between the heart's wild burning and the blood's,
Is part of life and of the soul's desire.

LETHE

III

There is a song to silence and the stars,
Between the forest and the temple's arches;
And down the stream of night, like nenuphars,
The tossing fires of the Mænads' torches.—
Here all my life waits lonely as the stars.—
Shall not one hour of all those hours suffice
For resignation God hath given as dower?
Between the summons and the sacrifice
One hour of love, th' eternity of an hour?

IV

The shrine is shattered and the bird is gone;
Dark is the house of music and of bridal:
The stars are stricken and the storm comes on;
Beneath a wreck of roses lies the idol,
Sad as the memory of a joy that 's gone.—
To dream of perished gladness and a kiss,
Waking the last chord of Love's broken lyre,
Between remembering and forgetting, this
Is part of life and of the soul's desire.

THE NAIAD

She sits among the iris stalks
Of bubbling brooks ; and leans for hours
Among the river's lily-flowers,
Or on their whiteness walks :
Above dark forest pools, gray rocks
Wall in, she leans with dripping locks,
And listening to the echo, talks
With her own face — Iothera.

There is no forest of the hills,
No valley of the solitude,
Nor fern nor moss, that may elude
Her searching step that stills :
She dreams among the wild-rose brakes
Of fountains that the ripple shakes,
And, dreaming of herself, she fills
The silence with " Iothera."

And every wind that haunts the ways
Of leaf and bough, once having kissed
Her virgin nudity, goes whist

THE NAIAD

With wonder and amaze.

There blows no breeze which hath not
learned

Her name's sweet melody, and yearned
To kiss her mouth that laughs and says,
"Iothera, Iothera."

No wild thing of the wood, no bird,
Or brown or blue, or gold or gray,
Beneath the sun's or moon's pale ray,
That hath not loved and heard;
They are her pupils; she can say
No new thing but, within a day,
They have its music, word for word,
Harmonious as Iothera.

No man who lives and is not wise
With love for common flowers and trees,
Bee, bird, and beast, and brook, and breeze,
And rocks, and hills, and skies,—
Search where he will,— shall ever see
One flutter of her drapery,
One glimpse of limbs, or hair, or eyes
Of beautiful Iothera.

THE LIMNAD

I

The lake she haunts gleams mistily
Through sleepy boughs of melody,—
Lost 'mid lone hills beside the sea,
 In tangled bush and brier : —
Where reflected sunsets write
Ghostly things in golden light ;
Where, along the pine-crowned height,
Clouds of twilight, rosy white,
 Build far towers of fire.

II

'Mid the rushes there that swing,
Flowering flags where voices sing
When night-winds are murmuring,
 And the stars of midnight glitter ;
Blossom-white, with purple locks,
Underneath the stars' still flocks,
In the dusky waves she rocks,
Rocks, and all the landscape mocks
 With a song both sweet and bitter.

THE LIMNAD

III

Soft it sounds, at first, as dreams
Filled with tears that fall in streams;
Then it soars, until it seems
 Beauty's very self hath spoken;
And the woods grow silent quite,
Stars wax faint and flowers wane white;
And the nightingales that light
Near, or hear her through the night,
 Die, their hearts with longing broken.

IV

Dark, dim, and sad o'er mournful lands,
White-throated stars heaped in her hands,
Like wildwood buds, the Twilight stands,
 The Twilight, dreaming, lingers;
Listening where the Limnad sings
Witcheries, whose magic brings
A great moon from hidden springs,
Pale with amorous quiverings
 Feet of fire and silvery fingers.

V

In the vales Auloniads,
On the mountains Oreads,
On the leas Leimoniads,
 Whiter than the stars that glisten,

THE LIMNAD

Pan, the Satyrs, Dryades,
Fountain-lovely Naiades,
Foam-lipped Oceanides,
Breathless 'mid their seas and trees,
Stay and look and lean and listen.

VI

Large-eyed, Siren-like she stands,
In the lake or on its sands,
And with rapture from the hands
Of the Night some stars are shaken;
To her song the rushes swing,
Lilies nod and ripples ring,
Lost in helpless listening—
These will wake who hear her sing,
But one mortal will not waken.

BEFORE THE TEMPLE

I

All desolate she sate her down
Upon the marble of the temple's stair.
You would have thought her, with her eyes of
 brown,
Flushed cheeks and hazel hair,
 A Dryad dreaming there.

II

A priest of Bacchus passed, nor stopped
To chide her; deeming her — whose chiton hid
But half her bosom, and whose girdle dropped —
 Some grief-drowned Bassarid,
 The god of wine had chid.

III

With wreaths of woodland cyclamen
For Dian's shrine, a shepherdess drew near,



That reed-slender girl whom Pan pursued Page 242

Anemone



BEFORE THE TEMPLE

'All her young thoughts on vestal beauty, when —
She dare not look for fear —
Behold the goddess here!

IV

Fierce lights on shields of bossy brass
And helms of bronze, next from the hills deploy
Tall youths of Argos. And she sees *him* pass,
Flushed with heroic joy,
On towards the siege of Troy.

THE RUE-ANEMONE

Under an oak-tree in a woodland, where
The dreaming Spring had dropped it from her
hair,

I found a flower, through which I seemed to
gaze

Beyond the world and see what no man dare
Behold and live—the myths of bygone days —
Diana and Endymion; and the bare,
Slim beauty of the boy whom Echo wooed;
And Hyacinthus, whom Apollo dewed
With love and death; and Daphne, ever fair;
And that reed-slender girl whom Pan pursued.

I stood and gazed and through it seemed to see
The Dryad dancing by the forest tree,
Her hair wild blown: the Faun, with listening
ear,

Deep in the bosage, kneeling on one knee,
Watching the wandered Oread draw near,
Her wild heart beating like a honey-bee

THE RUE-ANEMONE

Within a rose.— All, all the myths of old,
All, all the bright shapes of the Age of Gold,
Peopling the wonder-worlds of Poetry,
Through it I seemed in fancy to behold.

What other flower, that, fashioned like a star,
Draws its frail life from earth and braves the
war

Of all the heavens, can suggest the dreams
That this suggests? in which no trace of mar
Or soil exists: where stainless innocence seems
Enshrined; and where, beyond our vision far,
That inaccessible beauty, which the heart
Worships as truth and holiness and art,
Is symbolized; wherein embodied are
The things that make the soul's immortal part.

ARTEMIS

Oft of the hiding Oread wast thou seen
At earliest morn, a tall, imperial shape,
High-buskined, dew-dripped, and on close, young
 curls,
Bright blackness of thick hair, the tipsy drops
Caught from the dripping sprays of under-
 bosks,—
Kissed of thy cheek and of thy shoulder
 brushed,—
Thy rosy cheek as far Aurora's fair,
Thy snowy shoulder Hebe-beautiful.

Oft did the shaggy hills and solitudes
Of Arethusa shout and ring and reel,
Reverberate and echo merrily,
Leap into sound with singing of thy hounds,
With the deep belling of thy noble hounds,
Big-mouthed and musical, that on the stag
Or bristling wild-boar furious grew in quest:
And thou, as keen, fleet-footed and clean-limbed,
Inviolable, with thy quivered crew,

ARTEMIS

Rushed, swinging on the wind free limbs and
lithe,
And locks, all radiance, flung back to blow
And balm with spice the wine-sharp air of morn.

Ai me! their throats! their clarion-crystal
throats,
That made the hills sing and the wood-ways
dance,
As if to orphic strains, and gave them life.
Ai me! their bosoms' deepness and the firm,
Pure, happy beauty of their naked limbs,
That stormed the forest vacancies with light,
Swift daylight of their splendor, and made blow,
Within the glad sonorous solitudes,
Old germs of flowerets a century cold.

The woodland Naiad whispered by her rock;
The Hamadryad, limpid-eyed and wild,
Expectant rustled by her usual oak
And laughed in wonder; and mad Pan himself
Reeled piping fiercely down the dinged deeps,
With rollicking eye that rolled a brutish joy.
And did some unwed maiden, musing where
Her father's well, among the god-graced hills;
Bubbled and babbled, hear thy bugled cry,
O Huntress, she, while deep her dripping jar

ARTEMIS

Unheeded brimmed, vowed her virginity
To thee — her shorn hair at thy vestal feet.

But, ah! not when the garish daylight fills
The forests with far-swimming gold and green
Let me behold thee, goddess! but when dim
The slow night settles on the haunted wood
And walks in mystery; and the myriad stars
Maze heaven with fire; and the echoy waste,
Far off, far off, in murmurs palpitates
Unto the Limnad's voice, unmerciful,—
Or is 't some night-bird breaking with song its
heart? —

Unmerciful and sad and bitter-sweet? —
Then come in all thy godhead, beautiful!
All beautiful and gentle, as thou cam'st
To lorn Endymion, who, in Lemnos once,
Lone in the wizard magic of the wood,
Wandered, a dreaming boy, unfriended, sad.—
It grew far off among the easy trees,
Thy pensive beauty, blossoming flower-like
Between the tree-trunks and the lacing limbs;
Bright in the leaves that kissed for very joy
And drunkenness of glory thus revealed.
He saw it all, from glorious face to feet —
The naked pearl of all thy loveliness,
Thy body's beauty, blended lily and rose,

ARTEMIS

Alone, unaccompanied of handmaidens.
Like some rare, radiant fruit Hesperian,
Not to be plucked of gods or men, thou hung'st
Upon the boughs of heaven. Thy moonéd voice
Came silvering on his wistful ear, and sighed
With light like leaves that kiss and cling again.
And on such perilous beauty that must slay,—
The poisonous favor of thy godliness,—
Feasting his every sense through eyes and ears,
His soul exalted waxed and amorous,—
Like some young god who, draining Olympian
 bowls,
Grows drunk with nectar,— with immortal love;
And what remained, ah, what remained but
 death!

APHRODITE

Apollo never smote as lovely a strain,
When swan-necked Hebe stayed her nectared
bowl

Among the circled and reclining gods,
To lend a listening ear and smile on him,
As that the Tritons blew on wreathéd horns
When Aphrodite, the cold ocean-foam,
In lovely labor, from its singing snow
Upheaved her dazzling form, like some white
pearl,

Naked and fresh within its ocean shell,
Borne shoreward from its bed of golden sponge
And crimson coral by the mad monsoon.

Wind-rocked she swung, her white feet on the
sea ;

And music raved down the slant western winds :
With swollen jowls the Tritons puffed their
conchs,

Where, breasting with white bosoms the green
waves,

APHRODITE

That laughed in ripples at Love's misty feet,
Oceanids with dimple-dented palms
Smote sidewise the pale bubbles of the foam,
Weaving a silver rainbow round her form.
Around her dolphins sparkled in the spray,
And Nereids sang, braiding their streaming
 locks,
Or flung them backward shimm'ring with bells
 of foam,
Till evening lit her loneliest, loveliest star,—
That passion-flower of the fields of heaven,—
Pale mirrored in the sheen of shadowy seas,—
That, like arrested music, o'er the caves
The Sirens haunt, hung deep on silent deep,—
When, in a hollow pearl, down moonwhite waves,
The creatures of the ocean danced their queen
Unto an island, like a rosy mist
That glimmering dreamed upon the glimmering
 blue.
There on the silvery sands beside the sea,
Beneath the moon, — narcissus-white, — they
 met,
She naked as a star and crowned with stars,
Child of the airy foam and Queen of Love.

PERSEPHONE

O Hades! O false gods! false to yourselves!
O Hades, 't was thy brother gave her thee
Without a mother's sanction or her knowledge!
Thou bor'st her to the dreadful gulfs below,
And made her queen, a shadowy queen of shades,
Queen of the fiery flood and iron realms,
Eternal torture and eternal pain.

On blossomed plains in Far Trinacria
A maiden,—the dark cascade of whose hair
Was deep as midnight circled and crowned with
stars,—
Hair dark as rays that brighten with the moon,—
Went gathering flowers with the Oceanids,
Lily and rose and pale Narcissus,— who
Was Echo's passion once, a flower now
That stares forever in the lake's still glass,
Whose ripple breaks its image, flickering seen,—
As once with tears it broke beneath his eyes,—
With the fast-falling dew that fills its heart:

PERSEPHONE

When suddenly there rose with iron wain,
With iron wain and steeds, a shape like death,
'Mid sallow smoke and sulphur and pale fires,
Its countenance ghastly, and its hair and eyes
Like the blue flame of sulphur: in its arms,
Its sooty arms, where like to supple steel
The mighty muscles lay, unto its breast,
Such as its arms, it drew her fragile form
As bosomed bulks of tempest in their joy
With arms of winds drag to their black embrace
A fairy mist that flecks with white the summer,
With wings of shadeless white, and 't is no more
Heaved on the rapture of the thunder's heart.

The snowy flowers shuddered and grew still;
With withered heads they bowed, and on the
stream —

Where all the day it was their wont to stand
In silence gazing at their loveliness —
Laid their fair faces limp and shriveled white.
Flames whipped the air like fiery scorpions,
Blasting and burning all the fragrant myths
That haunt the dew and lair in bloom and breeze.

O foam-fair daughters of Oceanus!
In vain you seek your mate and chide the flowers
For hiding her beneath their palms of snow:

PERSEPHONE

Ask of that shell, that conch of twisted pearl,
Which, like a spirit of the singing sea,
Moans at your pallid feet made wet with spray:
Then, sitting by the tumbling blue of waves,
Mourn to the waters and the ribbéd sands,
The falseness of the god who grasps the storm.

DEMETER

Eternal pouring in her lonely path
The wells of sorrow lay. I see her now,—
Methinks I see her now,— an awful shape
Guiding her dragon-team in frenzied search
From Argive lands unto the jeweled shores
Of the remotest Ind where Usha's hand
Soothed her grief-shadowed brow with kindly
touch,
And Savitar breathed sympathy from the skies
O'er uttermost regions of the faneless Brahm.

In melancholy search I see her roam
The Himalayas,— world-dividing,— pale
'Mid ice and snow, through mists and night
and storm;
Then back again with that wild mother woe
Fueling the anguished fire of her eyes,—
Back where old Atlas groans beneath the
world,
And the Cimmerian twilight weighs the soul.
Deep was her sleep in Persia's haunted vales,

DEMETER

Where many a languid Philomela moaned
Her heart to rest with heartbreak melody.
I see her near Ionia's swelling seas
Cull from the sands a labyrinthine shell,
Hollowing its spiral murmur to her ear,—
A pearly mouth against an ear of pearl,—
In hope some message of Persephone
It might impart; then finding all in vain,
In anguish and despair, cast it afar,
To watch the salt-spray flash, like some soft
 plume
Dropped from the wings of Eros, where it
 fell.
I see her take a flute of coral from
A listening Triton; and on Ithakan rocks
High seated at the starry close of day,—
When sad the moon rose from her salty couch,
Gazing with sorrow on her face of sorrow,—
Pipe pensive airs,—plaintive as Sirens sing
In streaming caves beneath the ocean wall,—
Till hoar Poseidon cleared his wrinkled front
And stilled his surgy clamors to a sigh.

This do I see, and more: Behold, with fear!
I see her 'mid the lonely groves of Crete,
Frighten the dun deer from th' o'ervaulted
 green

DEMETER

Of thickest boscage, searching every covert
With terror of her torches and her wail,
“Persephone! Persephone!” till the pines
Of mist-swathed Dicte shuddered through
their miles,
The panther roared down in the stream-mad
gorge,
And Echo shrieked from chasm to answering
chasm,
“Persephone!” bewildered with her woe:
As wild as when she echoed the despair,
Dishevel-haired, of maidens, wailing borne,—
Athenian tribute,—to that King of Crete,
Great Minos, when the Minotaur they saw
Grim, crouching in his labyrinth of stone.

DIONYSOS

“Io! Bacchus! Bacchus! Io! Io!
O Dionysos! Dionysos! ivy-crowned!
O let me sing thy triumph ere I die!”

I slept; and dreamed a Mænad came to me:
A harp of hollow agate strung with gold
Wailed 'neath her waxen fingers, and her heart
Under its gauze, through which the moonlight
shone,
Kept time with its wild throbbings to her song.

“Ægeus sleeps, O Dionysos! sleeps
Beneath the restless waves that sigh his name
Eternally at my dew-glistening feet.
Here 'twas he died, O Dionysos! here
The great king died for whom is named this
sea.—
O let me sing thy triumph ere I die!

“With the shrill syrinx and the kissing clang
Of silver cymbals, and the sound of flutes,

DIONYSOS

O pard-drawn youth, thou dist awake the
world

To joy and pleasure with thy sunny wine!

Mad'st India bow and the dun, flooding Nile

Grow purple with the murex of the wine

Cast from the fullness of Silenus' cup,

While yet the heavens of heat saw sarabands

Whirl 'mid the redness of the Libyan sands,

That drank the spilth of Bacchus, sparkling-
spun

From the Bacchante bowl, a beaded red

O'er the slant edge, that twinkled in the sun,

The tiger sun fierce-glaring overhead.

“What made gold Horus smile with golden
lips?

Anubis dire forget his ghosts to lead

To Hell's profoundness? — He, who stayed to
sip

One winking bubble from the wine-god's cup,

And, captive ever after, joined thy train? —

What made Osiris, 'mid the palms of Nile,

Leave Isis dreaming, and the frolic Pan's

Wild trebles follow as a roaring bull,

Far as the fanes of Indra; he who long

Was mourned in Memphis by his tawny
priests? —

DIONYSOS

Io! Bacchus! Bacchus! Io! Io!
The brimming purple of thy hollow gold
They tasted and, 'though gods, they worship'd
too!

“ Sad Echo sat once in a spiral cave;
She, from its sea-dyed labyrinth of rock,
Saw the long pageant dancing on the strand,
Where Nereus slept upon an isle of crags,
And o'er the slope of his far-foaming head
The strangeness of the orgies wildly cried,
Till the gray god awoke, at first in rage;
Serened his face then; stretched a welcoming
hand
With civil utterance for the Bacchus horn.
But Echo followed not; instead, she sits
Among her crags remembering that wild cry,
That nomad sound still haunting all her
dreams,
Confusing all her speech, that naught can say
Save warring words bewildering her ears
Like waves reverberant in a deep sea-cave.

“ Io! Bacchus! Bacchus! Io! Io!
See, the white stars, O Dionysos! see,
Have spilled their glittering globules, one by
one,—

DIONYSOS

Like bubbles winking in the cup of night,—
Down the dark west behind the mountain
chain.

Ægeus sleeps, lulled by my murmuring harp;
And I have sung thy triumph. Let me die!"

THE PAPHIAN VENUS

With anxious eyes and dry, expectant lips,
 Within the sculptured stoa by the sea,
All day she waited while, like ghostly ships,
 Long clouds rolled over Paphos: the wild
 bee
Hung in the sultry poppy, half asleep,
Beside the shepherd and his drowsy sheep.

White-robed she waited day by day; alone
 With the white temple's shrined concupis-
 cence,
The Paphian goddess on her obscene throne,
 Binding all chastity to violence,
All innocent to lust that feels no shame —
Venus Mylitta born of filth and flame.

So must they haunt her marble portico,
 The devotees of passion, passion-pale
As moonlight streaming through the stormy
 snow;

THE PAPHIAN VENUS

Dark eyes desirous of the stranger sail,—
The gods shall bring across the Cyprian Sea,
And him elected to their mastery.

A priestess of the temple came, when eve
Blazed, like a satrap's triumph, in the west;
And watched her listening to the ocean's
heave,
Dusk's golden glory on her face and breast,
And in her hair the rosy wind's caress,—
Pitying her dedicated tenderness.

When out of darkness night persuades the
stars,
A dream shall bend above her saying, " Soon
A barque shall come with purple sails and
spars,
Sailing from Tarsus 'neath a low white
moon;
And thou shalt see one in a robe of Tyre
Facing toward thee like the god Desire.

" Rise then! as, clad in starlight, riseth night —
Thy nakedness clad on with loveliness!
So shalt thou see him, like the god Delight,
Breast through the foam and climb the cliff
to press

THE PAPHIAN VENUS

Hot lips to thine and lead thee in before
Love's awful presence where ye shall adore."

Thus at her heart the vision entered in,
With lips of lust the lips of song had kissed,
And eyes of passion laughing with sweet sin,
A starry splendor robed in amethyst,
Seen like that star set in the glittering
gloom —
Venus Mylitta born of fire and foam.

So shall she dream until, near middle night,—
When on the blackness of the ocean's rim
The moon, like some war-galleon all alight
With blazing battle, from the sea shall
swim,—
A shadow, with inviolate lips and eyes,
Shall rise before her speaking in this wise:

"So hast thou heard the promises of one,—
Of her, with whom the God of gods is
wroth,—
For whom was prophesied at Babylon
The second death — Chaldæan Mylidoth!
Whose feet take hold on darkness and despair,
Hissing destruction in her heart and hair!

THE PAPHIAN VENUS

“Wouldst thou behold the vessel she would
bring? —

A wreck! ten hundred years have smeared
with slime:

A hulk! where all abominations cling,

The spawn and vermin of the seas of time:
Wild waves have rotted it, fierce suns have
scorched,

Mad winds have tossed and stormy stars have
torched.

“Can lust give birth to love! The vile and foul
Be mother to beauty? Lo! can this thing
be? —

A monster like a man shall rise and howl

Upon the wreck across the crawling sea,
Then plunge; and swim unto thee; like an
ape,

‘A beast all belly.—Thou canst not escape!’”

Gone was the shadow with the suffering brow;

And in the temple’s porch she lay and wept,
Alone with night, the ocean, and her vow.

Then up the east the moon’s full splendor
swept,

And, dark between it — wreck or argosy? —

A sudden vessel far away at sea.

GARGAPHIE

"Succinctæ sacra Dianæ."—Ovid.

I

There the ragged sunlight lay
Tawny on thick ferns and gray
 On dark waters: dimmer,
Lone and deep, the cypress grove
Bowered mystery and wove
Braided lights, like those that love
On the pearl plumes of a dove
 Faint to gleam and glimmer.

II

There centennial pine and oak
Into stormy utterance broke:
 Hollow rocks gloomed, slanting,
Echoing in dim arcade,
Looming with long moss, that made
Twilight streaks in tatters laid:
Where the wild hart, hunt-affrayed,
 Plunged the water, panting.

GARGAPHIE

III

Poppies of a sleepy gold
Mooned the gray-green darkness rolled
Down its vistas, making
Wisp-like blurs of flame. And pale
Stole the dim deer down the vale:
And the haunting nightingale
Sang unseen — the olden tale
All its hurt heart breaking.

IV

There the hazy serpolet,
Dewy cistus, blooming wet,
Blushed on bank and boulder:
There the cyclamen, as wan
As faint footsteps of the Dawn,
Carpeted the spotted lawn:
Where the nude nymph, dripping drawn,
Sloped a flower-white shoulder.

V

In the citrine shadow there
What tall presences and fair,
Godlike, lingered! — gracious
As the rock-rose there that grew:—

GARGAPHIE

Delicate and dim as dew
Stepped from out the oaks, and drew
Faun-like forms to follow, who
Filled the forest spacious!

VI

Guarded that Bœotian
Valley so no foot of man
Soiled its silence holy
With profaning tread — save one,
The Hyantian: Actæon,
Who beheld but was undone
By Diana's wrath, that none,—
'Though with magic moly,—

VII

Might escape.— That valley sleeps
Lost to us: enchantment keeps
Sacred still its banished
Bowers that no man may see,
Fountains that her deity
Haunts, and every rock and tree
Where her hunt goes swinging free
As in ages vanished.

THE FAUN

The joys that touched thee once, be mine!

The sympathies of sky and sea,
The friendship of each rock and pine,
That made thy lonely life, ah me!
In Tempe or in Gargaphie.

Such joy as thou didst feel when first,
On some wild crag, thou stood'st alone
And watched the mountain tempest burst,
With streaming thunder, lightning sown,
On Latmos or on Pelion.

Thy awe! when crowned with vastness, Night
And Silence ruled the deep's abyss;
And through dark leaves thou saw'st the white
Breasts of the starry maids who kiss
Pale feet of moony Artemis.

Thy dreams! when, breasting matted weeds
Of Arethusa, thou didst hear
The music of the wind-swept reeds;
And down dim forest-ways drew near
Shy herds of slim Arcadian deer.

THE FAUN

Thy wisdom! that knew naught but love
And beauty, with which love is fraught;
The wisdom of the heart — whereof
All noblest passions spring — that thought
As Nature thinks, “All else is naught.”

Thy hope! wherein To-morrow set
No shadow; hope that, lacking care
And retrospect, held no regret,
But bloomed in rainbows everywhere
Filling with gladness all the air.

These were thine all: in all life's moods
Embracing all of happiness:
And when within thy long-loved woods
Didst lay thee down to die, no less
Thy happiness stood by to bless.

APOLLO

I

All the Lydian notes revealing,
Son of Leto, oh, come stealing
As the wind Thessalian rivers
Whisper of! the wind that shivers
Every ripple into stars,
In the sunlight's golden bars.
Touch thy harp, that haunts the oaks,
With the mastery that invokes
Naiad music of the fount,
Oread music of the mount;
And such satyr song as keeps
Revel on Lycæan steeps,
When night nods, a Mænad shape,
Purple with dusk's staining grape.
Wake such chords as dewy grounds
Echo when no mortal hounds
Bell the hunt, whose spear-point shines
Through Arcadia's tangled vines,
When the half-awakened Dawn,

APOLLO

Dreaming on a mountain lawn,
Lets her golden sandals lie
And walks barefooted through the sky;
And by Arethusa's bank,
Swift upon the red hart's flank,
Drives Diana's buskined band
Down the cistus-blossomed strand.
Then Love's minors, swooning o'er
The mountain hush, the ocean roar,
As Selene, stealing, sails
Over Lemnos' lakes to vales
Where Endymion dreams and feels
Love her stolen kiss reveals.

II

Thou hast sung of Helicon :
How the sister Muses won
From the nine Pierides
Empire o'er the harmonies.
Thou hast sung of Tempe's maid,
And the sudden laurel's aid.
Thou hast sung of many loves
Of the gods that haunt the groves
Where the marble altar stands
Rose-heaped by the balmy hands
Of Romance and Beauty ; where,

APOLLO

High upon the temple stair,
Priest-like, bay-crowned, white of hair,
Old Tradition, looking up,
Pours libation from his cup.
Thou hast sung, all sweet of tongue,
As once wild Amphion sung,
Songs,— Parnassian rocks,— that swung
Each in its lyric niche, and massed
Such mural heights of song and vast,
Melodious walls of poesy,
That Time himself shall not outlast,
Enduring as eternity.

III

Ours shall be no island song,
Suited to a maiden throng,
Dancing with their wreaths of roses
To the double-flute's soft closes! —
But a Nation's! whose large eyes
With life's liberty are wise,
And consenting sympathies
Of all arts and sciences.
She! who stands above the storms
With truth's thunder in her arms,
And the star-serenity
Of her hope bound burningly

APOLLO

Round her brow ; and at her knee
The Spirit of Progress who is shod
With ethereal fire of God. . . .
Yea ! thy last shall still be first —
Some wild epopee to burst
With such organ notes as rang
When the stars of morning sang,
And the Sons of Heaven sent
Shoutings through the firmament ;
As our years have justified
And the stars have prophesied.
1886.

JOTUNHEIM

I

Beyond the Northern Lights, in regions haunted
Of twilight, where the world is glacier planted,
And pale as Loké in his cavern when
The serpent's slaver burns him to the bones,
I saw the phantasms of gigantic men,
The prototypes of vastness, quarrying stones;
Great blocks of winter, glittering with the
 morn's
And evening's colors,—wild prismatic tones
Of boreal beauty.—Like the three gray Norns,
Silence and solitude and terror loomed
Around them where they labored. Walls arose,
Vast as the Andes when creation boomed
Insurgent fire; and through the rushing snows
Enormous battlements of tremendous ice,
Bastioned and turreted, I saw arise.

II

But who can sing the workmanship gigantic
That reared within its coruscating dome

JOTUNHEIM

The roaring fountain, hurling an Atlantic
Of liquid ice that flashed with flame and foam?
An opal spirit, various and many formed,—
In whose clear heart reverberant fire stormed,—
Seemed its inhabitant; and through pale halls,
And deep diaphanous walls,
And corridors of whiteness,
Auroral colors swarmed,
As rosy-flickering stains,
Or lambent green, or gold, or crimson, warmed
The pulsing crystal of the spirit's veins
With ever-changing brightness.
And through the Arctic night there went a voice,
As if the ancient Earth cried out, "Rejoice!"
My heart is full of lightness!"

III

Here well might Thor, the god of war,
Harness the whirlwinds to his car,
While, mailed in storm, his iron arm
Heaves high his hammer's lava-form,
And red and black his beard streams back,
Like some fierce torrent scoriac,
Whose earthquake light glares through the night
Around some dark volcanic height;
And through the skies Valkyrian cries

JOTUNHEIM

Trumpet, as battleward he flies,
Death in his hair and havoc in his eyes.

IV

Still in my dreams I hear that fountain flowing;
Beyond all seeing and beyond all knowing;
Still in my dreams I see those wild walls glowing
 With hues, Aurora-kissed;
And through huge halls fantastic phantoms
 going,

 Vast shapes of snow and mist,—
Sonorous clarions of the tempest blowing,—
 That trail dark banners by,
 Cloudlike, underneath the sky
 Of the caverned dome on high,
 Carbuncle and amethyst,—
 Still I hear the ululation
 Of their stormy exultation,
 Multitudinous, and blending
 In hoarse echoes, far, unending;
 And, through halls of fog and frost,
 Howling back, like madness lost
 In the moonless mansion of
 Death and demon-haunted love.

JOTUNHEIM

V

Still in my dreams I hear the mermaid singing;
The mermaid music at its portal ringing;
The mermaid song, that hinged with gold its
door,

And, whispering evermore,
Hushed the ponderous hurl and roar
And vast æolian thunder
Of the chained tempests under

The frozen cataracts that were its floor.—

And, blinding beautiful, I still behold
The mermaid there, combing her locks of gold,
While at her feet, green as the Northern Seas,
Gambol her flocks of seals and walruses;
While, like a drift, her dog,— a Polar bear,—
Lies by her, glowering through his shaggy hair.

VI

O wondrous house, built by supernal hands
In vague and ultimate lands!
Thy architects were behemoth wind and cloud,
That, laboring loud,
Mountained thy world foundations and uplifted
Thy skyey bastions drifted
Of piled eternities of ice and snow;
Where storms, like ploughmen, go,

JOTUNHEIM

Ploughing the deeps with awful hurricane;
Where, spouting icy rain,
The huge whale wallows; and through furious
hail
Th' explorer's tattered sail
Drives like the wing of some terrific bird,
Where wreck and famine herd.—

VII

Home of the red Auroras and the gods!
He who profanes thy perilous threshold,—
where
The ancient centuries lair,
And, glacier-throned, thy monarch, Winter,
nods,—
Let him beware!
Lest coming on that hoary presence there,
Whose pitiless hand,
Above that hungry land,
An iceberg wields as sceptre, and whose crown
The North Star is, set in a band of frost,
He, too, shall feel the bitterness of that frown,
And, turned to stone, forevermore be lost.

DIONYSIA

The day is dead; and in the west
The slender crescent of the moon —
Diana's crystal-kindled crest —
Sinks hillward in a silvery swoon.
What is the murmur in the dell?
The stealthy whisper and the drip?
A Dryad with her leaf-light trip?
A Naiad o'er her fountain well?—
Who, with white fingers for her comb,
Sleeks her blue hair, and from its curls
Showers slim minnows and pale pearls,
And hollow music of the foam.
What is it in the vistaed ways
That leans and springs, and stoops and
 sways?—
The naked limbs of one who flees?
An Oread who hesitates
Before the Satyr form that waits,
Crouching to leap, that there she sees?
Or under boughs, reclining cool,
A Hamadryad, like a pool

DIONYSIA

Of moonlight, palely beautiful?
Or Limnad, with her liliated face,
More lovely than the misty lace
That haunts a star in a firefly place?
Or is it some Leimoniad
In wildwood flowers dimly clad?
Oblong blossoms white as froth,
Or mottled like the tiger-moth;
Or brindled as the brows of death,
Wild of hue and wild of breath:
Here ethereal flame and milk
Blent with velvet and with silk;
Here an iridescent glow
Mixed with satin and with snow:
Pansy, poppy and the pale
Serpolet and galingale;
Mandrake and anemone,
Honey-reservoirs o' the bee;
Cistus and the cyclamen,—
Cheeked like blushing Hebe this,
And the other white as is
Bubbled milk of Venus when
Cupid's baby mouth is pressed,
Rosy, to her rosy breast.
And, besides, all flowers that mate
With aroma, and in hue
Stars and rainbows duplicate

DIONYSIA

Here on earth for me and you.
Yea! at last mine eyes can see!
'T is no shadow of the tree
Swaying softly there, but she! —
Mænad, Bassarid, Bacchant,
What you will, who doth enchant
Night with sensuous nudity.
Lo! again I hear her pant
Breasting through the dewy glooms —
Through the glow-worm gleams and glow-
ers
Of the starlight; wood-perfumes
Swoon around her and frail showers
Of the leaflet-tilted rain.
Lo! like love, she comes again
Through the pale voluptuous dusk,
Sweet of limb with breasts of musk.
With her lips, like blossoms, breathing
Honeyed pungence of her kiss,
And her auburn tresses wreathing
Like umbrageous helichrys,
There she stands, like flame and snow,
In the moon's ambrosial glow,
Both her shapely loins low-looped
With the balmy blossoms, drooped,
Of the deep amaracus.
Spiritual, yet sensual,

DIONYSIA

Lo, she ever greets me thus
In my vision ; white and tall,
Her delicious body there,—
Raimented with amorous air,—
To my mind expresses all
The allurements of the world.
And once more I seem to feel
On my soul, like frenzy, hurled
All the passionate past.— I reel,
Greek again in ancient Greece,
In the Pyrrhic revelries ;
In the mad and Mænad dance ;
Onward dragged with violence :
Pan and old Silenus and
Faunus and a Bacchant band
Round me. Wild my wine-stained hand
O'er tumultuous hair is lifted ;
While the flushed and Phallic orgies
Whirl around me ; and the marges
Of the wood are torn and rifted
With lascivious laugh and shout.
And barbarian there again,—
Shameless with the shameless rout,
Bacchus lusting in each vein,—
With her pagan lips on mine,
Like a god made drunk with wine,
On I reel ; and in the revels

DIONYSIA

Her loose hair, the dance dishevels,
Blows, and 'thwart my vision swims
All the splendor of her limbs. . . .
So it seems. Yet woods are lonely.
And when I again awake,
I shall find their faces only
Moonbeams in the boughs that shake;
And their revels — but the rush
Of night-winds through bough and brush.
But my dreaming?— is it more
Than mere dreaming? Is a door
Opened in my soul? a curtain
Raised? to let me see for certain
I have lived that life before?

VINE AND SYCAMORE

I

Here where a tree and its wild liana,
Leaning over the streamlet, grow,
Once a nymph, like the moon'd Diana,
Sat in the ages long ago,
Sat with a mortal with whom she had mated,
Sat and smiled with a mortal youth,
Ere he of the forest, the god who hated,
Changed the two into forms uncouth. . . .

II

Once in the woods she had heard a shepherd,
Heard a reed in a golden glade;
Followed, and clad in the skin of a leopard,
Found him fluting within the shade.
Found him sitting with bare brown shoulder,
Lithe and young as a sapling oak,
And leaning over a mossy boulder,
Love in her dryad heart awoke.

VINE AND SYCAMORE

III

White she was as a dogwood flower,
Rosy white as a wild-crab bloom,
Fragrant white as a haw-tree bower
Full of sap and the May's perfume.
He who saw her above him burning,
Beautiful, naked, in dawn arrayed,
Deemed her Diana, and from her turning,
Leapt to his feet and fled afraid.

IV

Far she followed and called and pleaded,
Ever he fled with never a look;
Fled, till he came to this spot, deep-reeded,
Came to the bank of this forest brook.
Here for a moment he stopped and listened,
Heard in her voice her heart's despair,
Saw in her eyes the love that glistened,
Sank on her bosom and rested there.

V

Close to her beauty she strained and pressed him,
Held and bound him with kiss on kiss;
Soft with her hands and her lips caressed him,
Sweeter of touch than a blossom is.

VINE AND SYCAMORE

Spoke to his heart, and with sweet persuasion
Mastered his soul till its fear was flown;
Smiled on his soul till its mortal evasion
Vanished, and body and soul were her own.

VI

Many a day had they met and mated,
Many a day by this wildwood brook,
When he of the forest, the god who hated,
Came on their love and changed with a look.
There on the shore, while they joyed and jested,
He in the shadows, unseen, espied
Her, like the goddess Diana breasted,
Him, like Endymion by her side.

VII

Lo! at a word, at a sign, their folded
Limbs and bodies assumed new form,
Hers to the shape of a tree were molded,
His to a vine with surrounding arm. . . .
So they stand with their limbs enlacing,
Nymph and mortal, upon this shore,
He forever a vine embracing
Her, a silvery sycamore.

GENIUS LOCI

I

What wood-god, on this water's mossy curb,
Lost in reflections of Earth's loveliness,
Did I, just now, unconsciously disturb?

I who haphazard, wandering at a guess,
Came on this spot, wherein with gold and flame
Of buds and blooms the Season writes its
name.—

Ah, me! could I have seen him ere alarm
Of my approach aroused him from his calm!
As he, part Hamadryad and, mayhap,
Part Faun, lay here; who left the shadow warm
As a wood-rose, and filled the air with balm
Of his wild breath as with ethereal sap.

II

Does not the moss retain some slight impress,
Green-dented down, of where he lay or trod?
Do not the flowers, so reticent, confess
With conscious looks the contact of a god?

GENIUS LOCI

Does not the very water garrulously
Boast the indulgence of a deity?
And hark!—in burly beech and sycamore
How all the birds proclaim it! and the leaves
Rejoice with clappings of their myriad hands!
And shall not I believe, too, and adore,
With such wide proof?—Yea, though my soul
perceives
No evident presence, still it understands.

III

And for a while it moves me to lie down
Here on the spot his god-head sanctified:
Mayhap some dream he dreamed may linger,
brown
And young as joy, around the forest side:
Some dream within whose heart lives no disdain
For such as I whose love is sweet and sane;
That may repeat, so none but I may hear—
As one might tell a pearl-strung rosary—
Some epic that the leaves have learned to
croon,
Some lyric whispered in the wildflower's ear,
Whose murmurous lines are sung by bird and
bee,
And all the insects of the night and noon.

GENIUS LOCI

IV

For, all around me, upon field and hill,
 Enchantment lies as of mysterious flutes;
As if the music of a god's good-will
 Had taken on material attributes
In blooms, like chords; and in the water-gleam,
That runs its silvery scales on every stream;
In sunbeam bars, up which the butterfly,
 A golden note, vibrates then flutters on —
 Inaudible tunes, blown on the pipes of Pan,
That have assumed a visible entity,
 And drugged the air with beauty so, a Faun,
Behold, I seem, and am no more a man.

DITHYRAMBICS

I

Tempest

Wrapped round of the night, as a monster is
 wrapped of the ocean,
Down, down through vast storeys of darkness,
 behold, in the tower
Of the heaven, the thunder! on stairways of
 cloudy commotion,
Colossal of tread, like a giant, from echoing
 hour to hour
Goes striding in rattling armor. . . .
The Nymph, at her billow-roofed dormer
Of foam; and the Sylvan — green-housed — at
 her window of leaves appears;
— As a listening woman, who hears
The approach of her lover, who comes to her
 arms in the night;
And, loosening the loops of her locks,
With eyes full of love and delight,

DITHYRAMBICS

From the couch of her rest in ardor and haste
arises.—

The Nymph, as if born of the tempest, like fire
surprises

The riotous bands of the rocks,
That face, with a roar, the shouting charge of
the seas.

The Sylvan,—through troops of the trees,
Whose clamorous clans with gnarly bosoms keep
hurling

Themselves on the guns of the wind,—goes
wheeling and whirling.

The Nymph, of the waves' exultation upheld,
her green tresses

Knotted with flowers of the hollow white foam,
dives screaming;

Then bounds to the arms of the storm, who
boisterously presses

Her hair and wild form to his breast that is
panting and streaming.

The Sylvan,—hard-pressed by the wind, the
Pan-footed air,—

On the violent backs of the hills,—

Like a flame that tosses and thrills

From crag to crag when the world of spirits is
out,—

Is borne, as her rapture wills,

DITHYRAMBICS

With glittering gesture and shout.
Now here in the darkness, now there,
From the rain-wild sweep of her hair,—
Bewilderingly volleyed o'er eyes and o'er lips,—
To the lambent swell of her limbs, her breasts
 and her hips,
She flashes her beautiful nakedness out in the
 glare
Of the tempest that bears her away,—
That bears *me* away!
Away, over forest and foam, over tree and spray,
Far swifter than thought, far swifter than sound
 or than flame;
Over ocean and pine,
In arms of tumultuous shadow and shine,—

Though Sylvan and Nymph do not
Exist, and only what
Of terror and beauty I feel and I name
As parts of the storm, the awe and the rapture
 divine
That here in the tempest are mine,—
The two are the same, the two are forever the
 same.

DITHYRAMBICS

II

Calm

Beautiful-bosomed, O night, in thy noon
Move with majesty onward! bearing, as lightly
As a singer may bear the notes of an exquisite
tune,
The stars and the moon
Through the clerestories high of the heaven, the
firmament's halls:
Under whose sapphirine walls,
June, hesperian June,
Robed in divinity wanders. Daily and nightly
The turquoise touch of her robe, that the violets
star,
The silvery fall of her feet, that lilies are,
Fill the land with languorous light and per-
fume.—
Is it the melody mute of bourgeoning leaf and
of bloom?
The music of Nature, that silently shapes in the
gloom
Immaterial hosts
Of spirits that have the flowers and leaves in
their keep,
That I hear, that I hear?

DITHYRAMBICS

With their sighs of silver and pearl?
Invisible ghosts,—
Each one a beautiful girl,—
Who whisper in leaves and glimmer in blossoms
 and hover
In color and fragrance and loveliness, breathed
 from the deep
World-soul of the mother,
Nature; — who, over and over,
Both sweetheart and lover,
Goes singing her songs from one sweet month to
 the other,—
That appear, that appear?
In forest and field, on hill-land and lea,
As crystallized harmony,
Materialized melody,
An uttered essence peopling far and near
The hyaline atmosphere? . . .

Behold how it sprouts from the grass and
 blooms from flower and tree!
In waves of diaphanous moonlight and mist,
In fugue upon fugue of gold and of amethyst,
Around me, above me it spirals; now slower,
 now faster,
Like symphonies born of the thought of a mu-
 sical master.—

DITHYRAMBICS

O music of Earth! O God, who the music in-
spired!

Let me breathe of the life of thy breath!

And so be fulfilled and attired

In resurrection, triumphant o'er time and o'er
death!

HYMN TO DESIRE

I

Mother of visions, with lineaments dulcet as
numbers
Breathed on the eyelids of love by music that
slumbers,
Secretly, sweetly, O presence of fire and snow,
Thou comest mysterious,
In beauty imperious,
Clad on with dreams and the light of no world
that we know,
Deep to my innermost soul am I shaken,
Helplessly shaken and tossed,
And of thy tyrannous yearnings so utterly taken,
My lips, unsatisfied, thirst ;
Mine eyes are accurst
With longings for visions that far in the night
are forsaken ;
And mine ears, in listening lost,
Yearn, yearn for the note of a chord that will
never awaken.

HYMN TO DESIRE

II

Like palpable music thou comest, like moon-
light; and far,—
Resonant bar upon bar,—
The vibrating lyre
Of the spirit responds with melodious fire,
As thy fluttering fingers now grasp it and ar-
dently shake,
With flame and with flake,
The chords of existence, the instrument star-
sprung,
Whose frame is of clay, so wonderfully molded
from mire.

III

Vested with vanquishment, come, O Desire, De-
sire!
Breathe in this harp of my soul the audible angel
of love!
Make of my heart an Israfel burning above,
A lute for the music of God, that lips, which are
mortal, but stammer!
Smite every rapturous wire
With golden delirium, rebellion and silvery
clamor,

HYMN TO DESIRE

Crying —“ Awake! awake!
Too long hast thou slumbered! too far from the
regions of glamour,
With its mountains of magic, its fountains of
faery, the spar-sprung,
Hast thou wandered away, O Heart!
Come, oh, come and partake
Of necromance banquets of beauty; and slake
Thy thirst in the waters of Art,
That are drawn from the streams
Of love and of dreams.

IV

“ Come, oh come!
No longer shall language be dumb!
Thy vision shall grasp —
As one doth the glittering hasp
Of a dagger made splendid with gems and
with gold —
The wonder and richness of life, not anguish
and hate of it merely.
And out of the stark
Eternity, awful and dark,
Immensity silent and cold,—
Universe-shaking as trumpets, or thunderous
metals

HYMN TO DESIRE

That cymbal; yet pensive and pearly
And soft as the rosy unfolding of petals,
Or crumbling aroma of blossoms that wither
 too early,—
The majestic music of Death, where he plays
On the organ, eternal and vast, of eons and
 days.”

NYMPH AND FAUN

With her soft face half turned to me
Like an arrested moonbeam, she
Stood in the cirque of that deep tree.

I took her by the hands; she raised
Her face to mine; and, half amazed,
I kissed her; and we stood and gazed.

How good to kiss her throat and hair,
And say no word! — Her throat was bare,
And, as the slim moon, young and fair.—

Had God not given us life for this?
The world-old, amorous happiness
Of arms that clasp, and lips that kiss.

O eloquence of limbs and arms!
O rhetoric of breasts, whose charms
Say to the sluggish blood what warms!

NYMPH AND FAUN

Had God not smiled upon this hour
That bloomed,— where love had all of
power,—
The senses' aphrodisiac flower?

The dawn was far away: the night
Hung savage stars of sultry white,
Lamp-like, above to give us light.

Night, night, who led us each to each,
Where heart with heart could hold sweet
speech,
With life's best gift within our reach.

And here it was — between the goals
Of flesh and spirit, sex controls —
Took place the marriage of our souls.

PARTING OF LEANDER AND HERO

I

Brows pale through blue-black tresses
Wet with the rain's cold kisses ;
Hair that the sea-wind tosses,
 Wild as wild wings in flight ;
Pale brows, some sad thought crosses,
 One kiss and then — good night.

II

Nay, love ! thou wilt undo me
 When in the heavy waves ! —
Come, smile ! and make unto me
 The billows' backs as slaves
To bear me and indue me
 With strength o'er ocean's graves.

III

Weep not, as heavy-hearted
 Before I go ! lest thou
Shouldst follow as we parted. —

PARTING OF LEANDER AND HERO

Come, gaze at me glad-hearted!
Not with sweet lips distorted
With fear; and eyes tear-smarted! —

Let me remember how
Thy face looks when thou smilest
And with soft words beguilest
My soul.— From feet to brow,
Come, strengthen thy strong lover
To breast the waves that cover
Deep caves where sea-nymphs hover,
Eager to seize him now.

IV

Thy image, love, shall follow
With breast pressed close to mine:
With arms from out whose hollow
No death can tear me. Follow,
Come, light me through the brine,
Dark eyes, fixed bright on mine,
And mouth as red as wine! —
Yea, give me wine of kisses,
Whose fire shall help me home,
Sweetheart, through foam that hisses,
The long wild miles of foam.

PARTING OF LEANDER AND HERO

V

Sweet! cease thy sighs and weeping!
'T is time for rest and sleeping,
And Venus-vestured dreams,
Where thy Leander, stooping,
Thou 'lt see as now, undrooping,
With eyes all unaccusing:

Not as thou saw'st, it seems,
In sleep last night, in dreams,
His curls with ocean oozing,
And wan of cheek and brow:
But, Hero, even as now,

Fair-favored as can make him
Thy smile, which is a might,
A hope, a god, to take him
Safe through this hell of night.

VI

Here in thy throat's white hollow
One last long kiss.—I go.—
Ah, Sweet! a kiss to follow
Down from thy throat's white hollow
Unto thy breast that 's whiter:—
Thine arms, that clasp me tighter;
One kiss then on thy mouth,
Warmer than all the South;

PARTING OF LEANDER AND HERO

And eyes, than waters brighter
Wherein the far stars glow.
Smile on me now I leave thee!—
And kiss me on the brow!—
Smile on me, love, nor grieve thee!
No thing can harm me now!

THE SPIRIT OF THE FOREST SPRING

Over the rocks she trails her locks,
Her mossy locks that drip, drip, drip:
Her sparkling eyes smile at the skies
In friendship-wise and fellowship:
While the gleam and glance of her countenance
Lull into trance the woodland places,
As over the rocks she trails her locks,
Her dripping locks that the long fern graces.

She pours clear ooze from her heart's cool cruse,
Its crystal cruse that drips, drips, drips:
And all the day its crystal spray
Is heard to play from her finger-tips:
And the slight, soft sound makes haunted
ground
Of the woods around that the sunlight laces,
As she pours clear ooze from her heart's cool
cruse,
Its dripping cruse that no man traces.

She swims and swims with glimmering limbs,
With lucid limbs that drip, drip, drip:

THE SPIRIT OF THE FOREST SPRING

Where beechen boughs build a leafy house,
Where her form may drowse or her feet may
trip;

And the liquid beat of her rippling feet
Makes three times sweet the forest mazes,
As she swims and swims with glimmering limbs,
With dripping limbs through the twilight's hazes.

Then wrapped in deeps of the wild she sleeps,
She whispering sleeps and drips, drips, drips;
Where moon and mist wreath neck and wrist,
And, starry-whist, through the night she slips:
While the heavenly dream of her soul makes
gleam

The falls that stream and the foam that races,
As wrapped in deeps of the wild she sleeps,
She dripping sleeps or starward gazes.

TO A PANSY-VIOLET

Found Solitary Among the Hills

I

O pansy-violet,
With early April wet,
How frail and lone you look
Lost in this sylvan nook
Of heaven-holding hills:
Down which the hurrying rills
Fling scrolls of melodies;
O'er which the birds and bees
Weave gossamers of song,
Invisible, but strong:
Sweet music-webs they spin
To snare the spirit in.

II

O pansy-violet,
Unto your face I set
My lips, and — do you speak?

TO A PANSY-VIOLET

Or is it but some freak
Of fancy, love imparts
Through you unto the heart's
Desire? whispering low
A secret none may know
But me, who sit and dream
Here by this forest-stream.

III

O pansy-violet,
O wilding floweret,
Hued like some dædal gem
Starring the diadem
Of fay or sylvan sprite,
Who, in the woods, all night
Is busy with the blooms,
Young leaves and wild perfumes,
Through you I seem t' have seen
All that our dreams may mean.

IV

O pansy-violet,
Long, long ago we met —
'T was in a Fairy tale:
Two children in a vale

TO A PANSY-VIOLET

Sat underneath the stars,
Far from the world of wars:
Each loved the other well:
Her eyes were like the spell
Of dusk and dawning skies —
The purple dark that dyes
The midnight: *his* were blue
As heaven the day shines through.

V

O pansy-violet,
What is this vague regret,
This yearning, so like tears,
That touches me through years
Long past, when myth and fable
In all strange things were able
To beautify the Earth,
Things of immortal worth?—
This longing, that to me
Is like a memory,
Lived long ago, of two
Fair forest children who
Loved with no mortal love;
Whom heaven smiled above,
Fostering; and when they died
Laid side by loving side.

TO A PANSY-VIOLET

VI

O pansy-violet,
Do you remember yet
That wood-god-guarded tomb,
Out of whose moss your bloom
Sprang, with three petals wan
As are the eyes of dawn;
And two as darkly deep
As are the eyes of sleep?

VII

O flower,— that seems to hold
Some memory of old,
A hope, a happiness,
At which I can but guess,—
You are a sign to me
Of immortality:
Through you my spirit sees
The deathless purposes
Of death, that still evolves
The beauty it resolves;
The change that still fulfils
Life's meaning as God wills.

PAGAN

The gods, who could loose and bind
In the long ago,
The gods, who were stern and kind
To men below,
Where shall we seek and find,
Or, finding, know?

Where Greece, with king on king,
Dreamed in her halls;
Where Rome kneeled worshiping,
The owl now calls,
And clambering ivies cling,
And the moonbeam falls.

They have served, and passed away
From the earth and sky,
And their creeds are a record gray,
Where the passer-by
Reads, "Live and be glad to-day,
For to-morrow ye die."

PAGAN

And shall it be so, indeed,
When we are no more,
That nations to be shall read,—
As we have before,—
In the dust of a Christian Creed,
But pagan lore?

BEAUTY AND ART

The gods are dead ; but still for me
Lives on in wildwood brook and tree
Each myth, each old divinity.

For me still laughs among her rocks
The Naiad ; and the Dryad's locks
Drop perfume on the wildflower flocks.

The Satyr's hoof still prints the loam ;
And, whiter than the wind-blown foam,
The Oread haunts her mountain home.

To him, whose mind is fain to dwell
With loveliness no time can quell,
All things are real, imperishable.

To him — whatever facts may say —
Who sees the soul beneath the clay,
Is proof of a diviner day.

The very stars and flowers preach
A gospel old as God, and teach
Philosophy a child may reach ;

BEAUTY AND ART

That can not die ; that shall not cease ;
That lives through idealities
Of Beauty, ev'n as Rome and Greece :

That lifts the soul above the clod,
And, working out some period
Of art, is part and proof of God.

THE OLD WATER-MILL

Wild ridge on ridge the wooded hills arise,
Between whose breezy vistas gulfs of skies
Pilot great clouds like towering argosies,
And hawk and buzzard breast the azure
breeze.

With many a foaming fall and glimmering
reach

Of placid murmur, under elm and beech,
The creek goes twinkling through long gleams
and glooms

Of woodland quiet, summered with perfumes:
The creek, in whose clear shallows minnow-
schools

Glitter or dart; and by whose deeper pools
The blue kingfishers and the herons haunt;
That, often startled from the freckled flaunt
Of blackberry-lilies — where they feed and
hide —

Trail a lank flight along the forestside
With eery clangor. Here a sycamore,

THE OLD WATER-MILL

Smooth, wave-uprooted, builds from shore to
shore

A headlong bridge; and there, a storm-hurled
oak

Lays a long dam, where sand and gravel choke
The water's lazy way. Here mistflower blurs
Its bit of heaven; there the oxeye stirs
Its gloaming hues of pearl and gold; and here,
A gray, cool stain, like dawn's own atmos-
phere,

The dim wild-carrot lifts its crumpled crest:
And over all, at slender flight or rest,
The dragon-flies, like coruscating rays
Of lapis-lazuli and chrysoprase,
Drowsily sparkle through the summer days:
And, dewlap-deep, here from the noontide
heat

The bell-hung cattle find a cool retreat;
And through the willows girdling the hill,
Now far, now near, borne as the soft winds
will,

Comes the low rushing of the water-mill.

Ah, lovely to me from a little child,
How changed the place! wherein once, unde-
filed,

The glad communion of the sky and stream

THE OLD WATER-MILL

Went with me like a presence and a dream.
Where once the brambled meads and orchard-
lands

Poured ripe abundance down with mellow
hands

Of summer; and the birds of field and wood
Called to me in a tongue I understood;
And in the tangles of the old rail-fence
Even the insect tumult had some sense,
And every sound a happy eloquence:
And more to me than wisest books can teach
The wind and water said; whose words did
reach

My soul, addressing their magnificent
speech,—

Raucous and rushing,—from the old mill-
wheel,

That made the rolling mill-cogs snore and
reel,

Like some old ogre in a fairy tale
Nodding above his meat and mug of ale.

How memory takes me back the ways that
lead —

As when a boy — through woodland and
through mead!

To orchards fruited; or to fields in bloom;

THE OLD WATER-MILL

Or briery fallows, like a mighty room,
Through which the winds swing censers of
perfume,
And where deep blackberries spread miles of
fruit;—
A splendid feast, that stayed the ploughboy's
foot
When to the tasseling acres of the corn
He drove his team, fresh in the primrose
morn;
And from the liberal banquet, nature lent,
Took dewy handfuls as he whistling went.—
A boy once more, I stand with sunburnt feet
And watch the harvester sweep down the
wheat;
Or laze with warm limbs in the unstacked
straw
Nearby the thresher, whose insatiate maw
Devours the sheaves, hot drawling out its
hum—
Like some great sleepy bee, above a bloom,
Made drunk with honey—while, grown big
with grain,
The bulging sacks receive the golden rain.
Again I tread the valley, sweet with hay,
And hear the bob-white calling far away,
Or wood-dove cooing in the elder-brake;

THE OLD WATER-MILL

Or see the sassafras bushes madly shake
As swift, a rufous instant, in the glen
The red fox leaps and gallops to his den;
Or, standing in the violet-colored gloam,
Hear roadways sound with holiday riding
home
From church, or fair, or county barbecue,
Which the whole country to some village
drew.

How spilled with berries were its summer
hills,
And strewn with walnuts all its autumn
rills —
And chestnuts, burring from the spring's long
flowers! —
When from their tops the trees seemed
streaming showers
Of slender silver, cool, crepuscular,
And like a nebulous radiance shone afar. —
And maples! how their sappy hearts would
gush
Rude troughs of syrup, when the winter bush
Steamed with the sugar-kettle, day and night,
And, red, the snow was streaked with fire-
light.
Then was it glorious! the mill-dam's edge,

THE OLD WATER-MILL

One slope of frosty crystal, laid a ledge
Of pearl across; above which, sleeted trees
Tossed arms of ice, that, clashing in the
 breeze,
Tinkled the ringing creek with icicles,
Thin as the peal of far-off Elfland bells:
A sound that in my city dreams I hear,
That brings before me, under skies that clear,
The old mill in its winter garb of snow,
Its frozen wheel like a hoar beard below,
And its west windows, two deep eyes aglow.

Ah, ancient mill, still do I picture o'er
Thy cobwebbed stairs and loft and grain-
 strewn floor;
Thy door,—like some brown, honest hand of
 toil,
And honorable with labor of the soil,—
Forever open; through which, on his back
The prosperous farmer bears his bursting
 sack,
And while the miller measures out his toll,
Again I hear, above the cogs' loud roll,—
That makes stout joist and rafter groan and
 sway,—
The harmless gossip of the passing day:
Good country talk, that tells how so-and-so

THE OLD WATER-MILL

Has died or married; how curculio
And codling-moth have ruined half the fruit,
And blight plays mischief with the grapes to
boot;

Or what the news from town; next county
fair;

How well the crops are looking everywhere:
Now this, now that, on which their interests
fix,

Prospects for rain or frost, and politics.

While all around, the sweet smell of the meal
Filters, warm-pouring from the grinding
wheel

Into the bin; beside which, mealy white,
The miller looms, dim in the dusty light.

Again I see the miller's home, between
The crinkling creek and hills of beechen
green:

Again the miller greets me, gaunt and brown,
Who oft o'erawed my youth with gray-browed
frown

And rugged mien: again he tries to reach
My youthful mind with fervid scriptural
speech.—

For he, of all the country-side confessed,
The most religious was and goodliest;

THE OLD WATER-MILL

A Methodist, and one whom faith still led,
No books except the Bible had he read —
At least so seemed it to my younger head.—
All things in Earth and Heav'n he 'd prove by
this,
Be it a fact or mere hypothesis;
For to his simple wisdom, reverent,
“ *The Bible says* ” was all of argument.—
God keep his soul! his bones were long since
laid
Among the sunken gravestones in the shade
Of those black-lichened rocks, that wall
around
The family burying-ground with cedars
crowned;
Where bristling teasel and the brier combine
With clambering wood-rose and the wild-
grape vine
To hide the stone whereon his name and dates
Neglect, with mossy hand, obliterates.

THE RAIN-CROW

I

Can freckled August,—drowsing warm and
blond

Beside a wheat-shock in the white-topped
mead,

In her hot hair the oxeyed daisies wound,—

O bird of rain, lend aught but sleepy heed

To thee? when no plumed weed, no feather'd
seed

Blows by her; and no ripple breaks the pond,

That gleams like flint within its rim of
grasses,

Through which the dragon-fly forever passes

Like splintered diamond.

II

Drouth weights the trees, and from the farm-
house eaves

The locust, pulse-beat of the summer day,

Throbs; and the lane, that shambles under leaves

THE RAIN-CROW

Limp with the heat — a league of ruddy way —
Is lost in dust ; and sultry scents of hay
Breathe from the panting meadows heaped with
sheaves —

Now, now, O bird, what hint is there of rain,
In thirsty heaven or on burning plain,
That thy keen eye perceives?

III

But thou art right. Thou prophesiest true.
For hardly hast thou ceased thy forecasting,
When, up the western fierceness of scorched
blue,
Great water-carrier winds their buckets bring
Brimming with freshness. How their dippers
ring
And flash and rumble ! lavishing large dew
On corn and forestland, that, streaming wet,
Their hilly backs against the downpour set,
Like giants, loom in view.

IV

The butterfly, safe under leaf and flower,
Has found a roof, knowing how true thou art ;
The bumblebee, within the last half-hour,
Has ceased to hug the honey to its heart ;

THE RAIN-CROW

While in the barnyard, under shed and cart,
Brood-hens have housed.— But I, who scorned
thy power,
Barometer of the birds,— like August there,—
Beneath a beech, dripping from foot to hair,
Like some drenched truant, cower.

THE HARVEST MOON

I

Globed in Heav'n's tree of azure, golden mellow
As some round apple hung
High on Hesperian boughs, thou hangest yellow
The branch-like clouds among:
Within thy light a sunburnt youth, named
Health,
Rests 'mid the tasseled shocks, the tawny
stubble;
And by his side, clad on with rustic wealth
Of field and farm, beneath thy amber bubble,
A nut-brown maid, Content, sits smiling still:
While through the quiet trees,
The mossy rocks, the grassy hill,
Thy silvery spirit glides to yonder mill,
Around whose wheel the breeze
And shimmering ripples of the water play,
As, by their mother, little children may.

THE HARVEST MOON

II

Sweet Spirit of the Moon, who walkest,— lifting,

Exhaustless on thy arm,

A vase of pearly fire,— through the shifting

Cloud-halls of calm and storm,

Pour down thy blossoms! let me hear them come,

Pelting with noiseless light the twinkling
thickets,

Making the darkness audible with the hum

Of many insect creatures, grigs and crickets:

Until it seems the elves hold revelries

By haunted stream and grove;

Or, in the night's deep peace,

The young-old presence of Earth's full increase

Seems telling thee her love,

Ere, lying down, she turns to rest, and smiles,

Hearing thy heart beat through the myriad
miles.

FIELD AND FOREST CALL

There is a field, that leans upon two hills,
Foamed o'er of flowers and twinkling with clear
rills;

That in its girdle of wild acres bears;
The anodyne of rest that cures all cares;
Wherein soft wind and sun and sound are blent
And fragrance — as in some old instrument
Sweet chords — calm things, that nature's magic
spell

Distils from heaven's azure crucible,
And pours on Earth to make the sick mind well.

There lies the path, they say —
Come, away! come, away!

There is a forest, lying 'twixt two streams,
Sung through of birds and haunted of dim
dreams;

That in its league-long hand of trunk and leaf
Lifts a green wand that charms away all grief;
Wrought of quaint silence and the stealth of
things,

FIELD AND FOREST CALL

Vague, whispering touches, gleams and twitter-
ings,

Dews and cool shadows — that the mystic soul
Of nature permeates with suave control,
And waves o'er Earth to make the sad heart
whole.

There lies the road, they say —
Come, away! come, away!

OLD HOMES

Old homes among the hills! I love their gar-
dens,
Their old rock-fences, that our day inherits;
Their doors, round which the great trees stand
like wardens;
Their paths, down which the shadows march like
spirits;
Broad doors and paths that reach bird-haunted
gardens.

I see them gray among their ancient acres,
Severe of front, their gables lichen-sprinkled,—
Like gentle-hearted, solitary Quakers,
Grave and religious, with kind faces wrinkled,—
Serene among their memory-hallowed acres.

Their gardens, banked with roses and with
lilies —

Those sweet aristocrats of all the flowers —
Where Springtime mints her gold in daffodillies,
And Autumn coins her marigolds in showers,
And all the hours are toilless as the lilies.

OLD HOMES

I love their orchards where the gay woodpecker
Flits, flashing o'er you, like a wingéd jewel;
Their woods, whose floors of moss the squirrels
checker
With half-hulled nuts; and where, in cool re-
newal,
The wild brooks laugh, and raps the red wood-
pecker.

Old homes! old hearts! Upon my soul forever
Their peace and gladness lie like tears and
laughter;
Like love they touch me, through the years that
sever,
With simple faith; like friendship, draw me after
The dreamy patience that is theirs forever.

A MEMORY

Above her, pearl and rose the heavens lay :
Around her, flowers scattered earth with gold,
Or down the path in insolence held sway —
Like cavaliers who ride the king's highway —
Scarlet and buff, within a garden old.

Beyond the hills, faint-heard through belts of
wood,
Bells, Sabbath-sweet, swooned from some far-
off town :
Gamboge and gold, broad sunset colors strewed
The purple west as if, with God imbued,
Her mighty pallet Nature there laid down.

Amid such flowers, underneath such skies,
Embodying all life knows of sweet and fair,
She stood ; love's dreams in girlhood's face and
eyes,
Fair as a star that comes to emphasize
The mingled beauty of the earth and air.

A MEMORY

Behind her, seen through vines and orchard
trees,
Gray with its twinkling windows — like the face
Of calm old-age that sits and smiles at ease —
Porched with old roses, haunts of honey-bees,
The homestead loomed dim in a glimmering
space.

For whom she waited in the afterglow,
Soft-eyed and dreamy 'mid the poppy and rose,
I do not know, I do not care to know : —
It is enough I keep her picture so,
Hung up, like poetry, in my life's dull prose.

A fragrant picture, where I still may find
Her face untouched of sorrow or regret,
Unspoiled of contact, ever young and kind,
The spiritual sweetheart of my soul and mind,
She had not been, perhaps, if we had met.

DOLCE FAR NIENTE

I

Over the bay as our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine,
Far to the east lay the ocean paling
Under the skies of Augustine.—
There, in the boat as we sat together,
Soft in the glow of the turquoise weather,
Light as the foam or a seagull's feather,
Fair of form and of face serene,
Sweet at my side I felt you lean,
As over the bay our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine.

II

Over the bay as our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine,
Pine and palm, in the west, hung, trailing
Under the skies of Augustine.—
Was it the wind that sighed above you?
Was it the wave that whispered of you?

DOLCE FAR NIENTE

Was it my soul that said, "I love you" ?
Was it your heart that murmured between,
Answering, shy as a bird unseen?
As over the bay our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine.

III

Over the bay as our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine,
Gray and low flew the heron, wailing
Under the skies of Augustine.—
Naught was spoken. We watched the simple
Gulls wing past. Your hat's white wimple
Shadowed your eyes. And your lips, a-dimple,
Smiled and seemed from your soul to wean
An inner beauty, an added sheen,
As over the bay our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine.

IV

Over the bay as our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine,
Red on the marshes the day flamed, failing
Under the skies of Augustine.—
Was it your thought, or the transitory

DOLCE FAR NIENTE

Gold of the west, like a written story,
Bright on your brow, that I read? the glory
And grace of love, like a rose-crowned queen
Pictured pensive in mind and mien?
As over the bay our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine.

V

Over the bay as our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine,
Wan on the waters the mist lay, veiling
Under the skies of Augustine.—
Was it the joy that begot the sorrow? —
Joy that was filled with the dreams that borrow
Prescience sad of a far To-morrow,—
There in the Now that was all too keen,
That shadowed the fate that might intervene?
As over the bay our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine.

VI

Over the bay as our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine,
The marsh-hen cried and the tide was ailing
Under the skies of Augustine.—

DOLCE FAR NIENTE

And so we parted. No vows were spoken.
No faith was plighted that might be broken.
But deep in our hearts each bore a token
Of life and of love and all they mean,
Beautiful, thornless, and ever green,
From over the bay where our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine.

St. Augustine, Fla., February, 1899.

THE PURPLE VALLEYS

Far in the purple valleys of illusion
I see her waiting, like the soul of music,
With deep eyes, lovelier than cerulean pansies,
Shadow and fire, yet merciless as poison;
With red lips sweeter than Arabian storax,
Yet bitterer than myrrh. O tears and kisses!
O eyes and lips, that haunt my soul forever!

Again Spring walks transcendent on the mountains:
The woods are hushed: the vales are full of shadows:
Above the heights, steeped in a thousand splendors,
Like some vast canvas of the gods, hangs burning
The sunset's wild sciography: and slowly
The moon treads heaven's proscenium,—night's stately
White queen of love and tragedy and madness.

THE PURPLE VALLEYS

Again I know forgotten dreams and longings;
Ideals lost; desires dead and buried
Beside the altar sacrifice erected
Within the heart's high sanctuary. Strangely
Again I know the horror and the rapture,
The utterless awe, the joy akin to anguish,
The terror and the worship of the spirit.

Again I feel her eyes pierce through and
 through me;
Her deep eyes, lovelier than imperial pansies,
Velvet and flame, through which her strong will
 holds me,
Powerless and tame, and draws me on and on—
 ward
To sad, unsatisfied and animal yearnings,
Wild, unrestrained — the brute within the hu-
 man —
To fling me panting on her mouth and bosom.

Again I feel her lips like ice and fire,
Her red lips, odorous as Arabian storax,
Fragrance and fire, within whose kiss destruction
Lies serpent-like. Intoxicating languors
Resistlessly embrace me, soul and body;
And we go drifting, drifting — she is laughing —
Outcasts of God, into the deep's abysm.

THE LAND OF ILLUSION

I

So we had come at last, my soul and I,
 Into that land of shadowy plain and peak,
 On which the dawn seemed ever about to
 break,
On which the day seemed ever about to die.

II

Long had we sought fulfillment of our dreams,
 The everlasting wells of Joy and Youth ;
 Long had we sought the snow-white flow'r of
 Truth,
That blooms eternal by eternal streams.

III

And, fonder still, we hoped to find the sweet
 Immortal presence, Love ; the bird Delight
 Beside her ; and, eyed with sidereal night,
Faith, like a lion, fawning at her feet.

THE LAND OF ILLUSION

IV

But, scorched and barren, in its arid well
We found our dreams' forgotten fountain-
head;
And by black, bitter waters, crushed and dead,
Among wild weeds, Truth's trampled asphodel.

V

And side-by side with pallid Doubt and Pain,
Not Love, but Grief did meet us there: afar
We saw her, like a melancholy star,
A pensive moon, move towards us o'er the plain.

VI

Sweet was her face as song that tells of home;
And filled our hearts with vague, suggestive
spells
Of pathos, as sad ocean fills its shells
With sympathetic moanings of the foam.

VII

She raised one hand and pointed silently,
And passed; her eyes, gaunt with a thirst un-
slaked,

THE LAND OF ILLUSION

Were worlds of woe, where tears in torrents
ached,
Yet never fell. And like a winter sea,—

VIII

Whose caverned crags are haunts of wreck and
wrath,
That house the condor pinions of the storm,—
My soul replied; and, weeping, arm in arm,
To'ards those dim hills, by that appointed path,

IX

We turned and went. Arrived, we did discern
How Beauty beckoned, white 'mid miles of
flowers,
Through which, behold, the amaranthine
Hours
Like maidens went, each holding high an urn;

X

Wherein, it seemed — drained from long chalices
Of those slim flowers — they bore mysterious
wine;
A popped vintage, full of sleep divine,
And pale forgetting of all miseries.

THE LAND OF ILLUSION

XI

Then to my soul I said, "No longer weep.
Come, let us drink; for hateful is the sky,
And earth is full of care, and life 's a lie.
So let us drink; yea, let us drink and sleep."

XII

Then from their brimming urns we drank sweet
must,
While all around us rose-crowned faces
laughed
Into our own: but hardly had we quaffed
When, one by one, these crumbled into dust.

XIII

And league on league the eminence of blooms,
That flashed and billowed like a summer sea,
Rolled out a waste of thorns and tombs; where
bee
And butterfly and bird hung dead in looms

XIV

Of worm and spider. And through tomb and
brier,

THE LAND OF ILLUSION

A thin wind, parched with bitter salt and
sand,
Went wailing as if mourning some lost land
Of perished empire, Babylon or Tyre.

XV

Long, long with blistered feet we wandered in
That land of ruins, through whose sky of
brass
Hate's harpy shrieked; and in whose iron
grass
The hydra hissed of undestroyable Sin.

XVI

And there at last, behold, the House of Doom,—
Red, as if Hell had glared it into life,
Blood-red, and howling with incessant
strife,—
With burning battlements, towered through the
gloom.

XVII

And throned within sat Darkness.— Who might
gaze
Upon that form, that threatening presence
there,

THE LAND OF ILLUSION

Crowned with the flickering corpse-lights of
Despair,
And yet escape sans madness and amaze?

XVIII

And we had hoped to find among these hills
The House of Beauty!—Curst, yea thrice
accurst,
The hope that lures one on from last to first
With vain illusions that no time fulfills!

XIX

Why will we struggle to attain, and strive,
When all we gain is but an empty dream?—
Better, unto my thinking, doth it seem
To end it all and let who will survive:

XX

To find at last all beauty is but dust:
That love and sorrow are the very same:
That joy is only suffering's sweeter name:
And sense is but the synonym of lust.

THE LAND OF ILLUSION

XXI

Far better, yea, to me it seems, to die!
To set glad lips against the lips of Death —
The only thing God gives that comforteth,
The only thing we do not find a lie.

THE LAST SONG

She sleeps: he sings to her: the day was long,
And, tired out with too much happiness,
She fain would have him sing of old Provence;
Old songs, that spoke of love in such soft tones,
Her restless soul was straight besieged of
dreams, .

And her wild heart beleaguered of deep peace,
And heart and soul surrendered unto sleep.—
Like perfect sculpture in the moon she lies,
Its pallor on her through heraldic panes
Of one tall casement's guléd quarterings.—
Beside her couch, an antique table, weighed
With gold and crystal; here, a carven chair,
Whereon her raiment,—that suggests sweet
curves

Of shapely beauty,—bearing her limbs' impress,
Is richly laid: and, near the chair, a glass,
An oval mirror framed in ebony:
And, dim and deep,—investing all the room
With ghostly life of woven women and men,

THE LAST SONG

And strange, fantastic gloom, where shadows
move,—
Dark tapestry,—which in the gusts—that
twinge
A dropping cresset's slender star of light—
Seems swayed of cautious hands, assassin-like,
That bide their hour.

She alone, deep-haired
As golden dawn, and whiter than a rose,
Divinely breasted as the Queen of Love,
Lies robeless in the glimmer of the moon,
Like Danaë within the golden shower.
Seated beside her aromatic rest,
In silence musing on her loveliness,
Her knight and troubadour. A lute, aslope
The curious baldric of his tunic, glints
Pearl-caught reflections of the moon, that seem
The voiceless ghosts of long-dead melodies.
In purple and sable, slashed with solemn gold,
Like stately twilight over slopes of snow,
He leans above her.—

Have his hands forgot
Their craft, that now they pause upon the
strings?
His lips, their art, that they cease, speechless
there?—

THE LAST SONG

His eyes are set . . . What is it stills to
stone

His hands? his lips? and mails him, head and
heel,

In terrible marble, motionless and cold?—

Behind the arras, can it be he feels,

Black-browed and grim, with eyes of sombre
fire,

Death towers above him with uplifted sword?

THE DREAM OF RODERICK

Below, the tawny Tagus swept
Past royal gardens, breathing balm:
Upon his couch the monarch slept;
The world was still; the night was calm.

Gray, Gothic-gated, in the ray
Of moonrise, tower and castle-crowned,
The city of Toledo lay
Beneath the terraced palace-ground.

Again, he dreamed, in kingly sport
He sought the tree-sequestered path,
And watched the ladies of his Court
Within the marble-basined bath.

Its porphyry stairs and fountained base
Shone, houried with voluptuous forms,
Where Andalusia vied in grace
With old Castile, in female charms.

THE DREAM OF RODERICK

And laughter, song, and water-splash
Rang round the place, with rock arcaded,
As here a breast or limb would flash
Where beauty swam or beauty waded.

And then, like Venus, from the wave
A maiden came, and stood below;
And by her side a woman slave
Bent down to dry her limbs of snow.

Then on the tessellated bank,
Robed on with fragrance and with fire,—
Like some exotic flower — she sank,
The type of all divine desire.

Then her dark curls, that sparkled wet,
She parted from her perfect brows,
And, lo, her eyes, like lamps of jet
Lit in an alabaster house.

And in his sleep the monarch sighed,
“Florinda!”—Dreaming still he moaned,
“Ah, would that I had died, had died!
I have atoned! I have atoned!” . . .

And then the vision changed: O’erhead
Tempest and darkness were unrolled,

THE DREAM OF RODERICK

Full of wild voices of the dead,
And lamentations manifold.

And wandering shapes of gaunt despair
Swept by; and faces pale with pain,
Whose eyes wept blood and seemed to glare
Fierce curses on him through the rain.

And then, it seemed, 'gainst blazing skies
A necromantic tower sate,
Crag-like on crags, of giant size;
With adamantine wall and gate.

And from the storm a hand of might,
Red-rolled in thunder, reached among
The gate's huge bolts, that burst — and
 night
Clanged ruin as its hinges swung.

Then far away a murmur trailed,—
As of sad seas on cavern'd shores,—
That grew into a voice that wailed,
“They come! they come! the Moors! the
 Moors!”

And with deep boom of atabals
And crash of cymbals and wild peal

THE DREAM OF RODERICK

Of battle-bugles, from its walls
An army rushed in glimmering steel.

And where it trod he saw the torch
Of conflagration stalk the skies,
And in the vanward of its march
The monster form of Havoc rise.

And Paynim war-cries rent the storm,
Athwart whose firmament of flame
Destruction reared an earthquake form
On wreck and death without a name. . . .

And then again the vision changed:
Where flows the Guadelete, see,
The champions of the Cross are ranged
Against the Crescent's chivalry.

With roar of trumpets and of drums
They meet; and in the battle's van
He fights; and, towering towards him,
comes
Florinda's father, Julian;

And one-eyed Taric, great in war:
And where these couch their burning spears,
The Christian phalanx, near and far,
Goes down like corn before the shears.

THE DREAM OF RODERICK

The Moslem wins : the Christian flies :
“ Allah il Allah,” hill and plain
Reverberate : the rocking skies,
“ Allah il Allah,” shout again.

And then he dreamed the swing of swords
And hurl of arrows were no more ;
And stranger than the howling hordes
Deep silence fell on field and shore.

And through the night, it seemed, he fled,
Upon a white steed like a star,
Across a field of endless dead,
Beneath a blood-red scimitar

Of sunset : And he heard a moan,
Beneath, around, on every hand —
“ Accurséd ! Yea, what hast thou done
To bring this curse upon thy land ? ”

And then an awful sense of wings :
And, lo ! the answer — “ ’Twas his lust
That was his crime. Behold ! e’en kings
Must reckon with Me. God is just.”

ZYPS OF ZIRL

The Alps of the Tyrol are dark with pines,
Where, foaming under the mountain spines,
The Inn's long water sounds and shines.

Beyond, are peaks where the morning weaves
An icy rose; and the evening leaves
The golden ghosts of a thousand sheaves.

Deep vines and torrents and glimmering haze,
And sheep-bells tinkling on mountain ways,
And fluting shepherds make sweet the days.

The rolling mist, like a wandering fleece,
The great, round moon in a mountain crease,
And a song of love make the nights all peace.

Beneath the blue Tyrolean skies
On the banks of the Inn, that foams and flies,
The storied city of Innsbruck lies.

ZYPS OF ZIRL

With its mediæval streets, that crook,
And its gabled houses, it has the look
Of a belfried town in a fairy book.

So wild the Tyrol that oft, 't is said,
When the storm is out and the town in bed,
The howling of wolves sweeps overhead.

And oft the burgher, sitting here
In his walled rose-garden, hears the clear
Shrill scream of the eagle circling near.

And this is the tale that the burghers tell:—
The Abbot of Wiltau stood at his cell
Where the Solstein lifts its pinnacle.

A mighty summit of bluffs and crags
That frowns on the Inn; where the forest
stags
Have worn a path to the water-flags.

The Abbot of Wiltau stood below;
And he was aware of a plume and bow
On the precipice there in the morning's glow,

A chamois, he saw, from span to span
Had leapt; and after it leapt a man;
And he knew 'twas the Kaiser Maximilian.

ZYPS OF ZIRL

But, see! though rash as the chamois he,
His foot less sure. And verily
If the King should miss . . . “Jesu!
Marie!

“The King hath missed!”—And, look, he falls!
Rolls headlong out to the headlong walls.
What Saint shall save him on whom he calls?

What Saint shall save him, who struggles
there
On the narrow ledge by the eagle’s lair,
With hook’d hands clinging ’twixt earth and
air?

The Abbot crosses himself in dread —
“Let prayers go up for the nearly dead,
And the passing-bell be tolled,” he said.

“For the House of Hapsburg totters! See,
How raveled the thread of its destiny,
Sheer hung between cloud and rock!” quoth
he.

But hark! where the steep of the peak reply,
Is it an eagle’s echoing cry?
And the fitting shadow, its plumes on high?

ZYPS OF ZIRL

No voice of the eagle is that which rings!
And the shadow, a wiry man who swings
Down, down where the desperate Kaiser
clings.

The *crampons* bound to his feet, he leaps
Like a chamois now; and again he creeps
Or twists, like a snake, o'er the fearful deeps.

“By his cross-bow, baldric, and cap's black
curl,”
Quoth the Abbot below, “I know the churl!
'Tis the hunted outlaw Zyps of Zirl.

“Upon whose head, or dead or alive,
The Kaiser hath posted a price.—Saints
shrive
The King!” quoth Wiltau. “Who may con-
trive

“To save him now that his foe is there?”—
But, hark! again through the breathless air
What words are those that the echoes bear?

“Courage, my King!—To the rescue, ho!”
The wild voice rings like a twanging bow,
And the staring Abbot stands mute below.

ZYPS OF ZIRL

And, lo! the hand of the outlaw grasps
The arm of the King — and death unclasps
Its fleshless fingers from him who gasps.

And how he guides! where the clean cliffs
wedge
Them flat to their brows; by chasm and ledge
He helps the King from the merciless edge.

Then up and up, past bluffs that shun
The rashest chamois; where eagles sun
Great wings and brood; where the mists are
spun.

And safe at last stand Kaiser and churl
On the mountain path where the mosses curl —
And this the revenge of Zyps of Zirl.

THE GLOW-WORM

How long had I sat there and had not beheld
The gleam of the glow-worm till something
compelled! . . .

The heaven was starless, the forest was deep,
And the vistas of darkness stretched silent in
sleep.

And late 'mid the trees had I lingered until
No thing was awake but the lone whippoor-
will.

And haunted of thoughts for an hour I sat
On a lichen-gray rock where the moss was a
mat.

And thinking of one whom my heart had held
dear,
Like terrible waters, a gathering fear

Came stealing upon me with all the distress
Of loss and of yearning and powerlessness:

THE GLOW-WORM

Till the hopes and the doubts and the sleepless
unrest

That, swallow-like, built in the home of my
breast,

Now hither, now thither, now heavenward
flew,

Wild-winged as the winds are: now suddenly
drew

My soul to abysses of nothingness where
All light was a shadow, all hope, a despair :

Where truth, that religion had set upon high,
The darkness distorted and changed to a lie :

And dreams of the beauty ambition had fed
Like leaves of the autumn fell withered and
dead.

And I rose with my burden of anguish and
doom,
And cried, "O my God, had I died in the
womb!

"Than born into night, with no hope of the
morn,

An heir unto shadows, to live so forlorn!

THE GLOW-WORM

“All effort is vain; and the planet called Faith
Sinks down; and no power is real but death.

“O light me a torch in the deepening dark
So my sick soul may follow, my sad heart may
mark!”—

And then in the darkness the answer!—It
came
From Earth, not from Heaven—a glimmer-
ing flame,

Behold, at my feet! In the shadow it shone
Mysteriously lovely and dimly alone:

An ember; a sparkle of dew and of glower;
Like the lamp that a spirit hangs under a
flower:

As goldenly green as the phosphorous star
A fairy may wear in her diadem's bar:

An element essence of moonlight and dawn
That, trodden and trampled, burns on and
burns on.

THE GLOW-WORM

And hushed was my soul with the lesson of
light

That God had revealed to me there in the
night:

Though mortal its structure, material its form,
The spiritual message of worm unto worm.

A FOREST IDYLL

I

Beneath an old beech-tree
They sat together,
Fair as a flower was she
Of summer weather.
They spoke of life and love,
While, through the boughs above,
The sunlight, like a dove,
Dropped many a feather.

II

And there the violet,
The bluet near it,
Made blurs of azure wet —
As if some spirit,
Or woodland dream, had gone
Sprinkling the earth with dawn,
When only Fay and Faun
Could see or hear it.

A FOREST IDYLL

III

She with her young, sweet face
And eyes gray-beaming,
Made of that forest place
A spot for dreaming:
A spot for Oreads
To smooth their nut-brown braids,
For Dryads of the glades
To dance in, gleaming.

IV

So dim the place, so blest,
One had not wondered
Had Dian's moonéd breast
The deep leaves sundered,
And there on them a while
The goddess deigned to smile,
While down some forest aisle
The far hunt thundered.

V

I deem that hour, perchance,
Was but a mirror
To show them Earth's romance
And draw them nearer:

A FOREST IDYLL

A mirror where, meseems,
All that this Earth-life dreams,
All loveliness that gleams,
 Their souls saw clearer.

VI

Beneath an old beech-tree
 They dreamed of blisses;
Fair as a flower was she
 That summer kisses:
They spoke of dreams and days,
Of love that goes and stays,
Of all for which life prays,
 Ah me! and misses.

UNDER THE ROSE

He told a story to her,
A story old yet new —
And was it of the Faery Folk
That dance along the dew?

The night was hung with silence
As a room is hung with cloth,
And soundless, through the rose-sweet hush,
Swooned dim the down-white moth.

Along the east a shimmer,
A tenuous breath of flame,
From which, as from a bath of light,
Nymph-like, the girl-moon came.

And pendent in the purple
Of heaven, like fireflies,
Bubbles of gold the great stars blew
From windows of the skies.

UNDER THE ROSE

He told a story to her,
 A story full of dreams —
And was it of the elfin things
 That haunt the thin moonbeams?

Upon the hill a thorn-tree,
 Crookéd and gnarled and gray,
Against the moon seemed some crutched
 hag
 Dragging a child away.

And in the vale a runnel,
 That dripped from shelf to shelf,
Seemed in the night, a woodland witch
 Who muttered to herself.

Along the land a zephyr,
 Whose breath was wild perfume,
That seemed a sorceress who wove
 Sweet spells of beam and bloom.

He told a story to her,
 A story young yet old —
And was it of the mystic things
 Men's eyes shall ne'er behold?

They heard the dew drip faintly
 From out the green-cupped leaf;

UNDER THE ROSE

They heard the petals of the rose
Unfolding from their sheaf.

They saw the wind light-footing
The waters into sheen ;
They saw the starlight kiss to sleep
The blossoms on the green.

They heard and saw these wonders ;
These things they saw and heard ;
And other things within the heart
For which there is no word.

He told a story to her,
The story men call Love,
Whose echoes fill the ages past —
And the world ne'er tires of.

SPIRIT OF DREAMS

I

Where hast thou folded thy pinions,
Spirit of Dreams?
Hidden elusive garments
Woven of gleams?
In what divine dominions,
Brighter than day,
Far from the world's dark torments,
Dost thou stay, dost thou stay? —
When shall my yearnings reach thee
Again?
Not in vain let my soul beseech thee!
Not in vain! not in vain!

II

I have longed for thee as a lover
For her, the one;
As a brother for a sister
Long dead and gone.

SPIRIT OF DREAMS

I have called thee over and over
Names sweet to hear ;
With words than music trister,
And thrice as dear.
How long must my sad heart woo thee,
Yet fail?
How long must my soul pursue thee,
Nor avail, nor avail?

III

All night hath thy loving mother,
Beautiful Sleep,
Lying beside me, listened
And heard me weep.
But ever thou soughtest another
Who sought thee not;
For him thy soft smile glistened —
I was forgot.
When shall my soul behold thee
As before?
When shall my heart enfold thee? —
Nevermore? nevermore?

PROCESSIONAL

Universes are the pages
Of that book whose words are ages ;
Of that book which destiny
Opens in eternity.

There each syllable expresses
Silence ; there each thought a guess ;
In whose rhetoric's cosmic runes
Roll the worlds and swarming moons.

There the systems, we call solar,
Equatorial and polar,
Write their lines of rushing light
On the awful leaves of night.

There the comets, vast and streaming,
Punctuate the heavens' gleaming
Scroll ; and suns, gigantic, shine,
Periods to each starry line.

PROCESSIONAL

There, initials huge, the Lion
Looms and measureless Orion;
And, as 'neath a chapter done,
Burns the Great-Bear's colophon.

Constellated, hieroglyphic,
Numbering each page terrific,
Fiery on the nebular black,
Flames the hurling zodiac.

In that book, o'er which Chaldean
Wisdom poured and many an eon
Of philosophy long dead,
This is all that man has read:—

He has read how good and evil,—
In creation's wild upheaval,—
Warred; while God wrought terrible
At foundations red of Hell.

He has read of man and woman;
Laws and gods, both beast and human;
Thrones of hate and creeds of lust,
Vanished now and turned to dust.

Arts and manners that have crumbled;
Cities buried; empires tumbled:

PROCESSIONAL

Time but breathed on them its breath;
Earth is builded of their death.

These but lived their little hour,
Filled with pride and pomp and power;
What availed it all at last?
We shall pass as they have passed.

Still the human heart will dream on
Love, part angel and part demon;
Yet, I question, what secures
Our belief that aught endures?

In that book, o'er which Chaldean
Wisdom poured and many an eon
Of philosophy long dead,
This is all that man has read.

SONG AND STORY

TO HARRISON S. MORRIS

*Ah, not for us the Heavens that hold
God's message of Promethean fire!
The flame that fell on bards of old
To hallow and inspire.*

*Yet let the soul dream on and dare
No less Song's heights where these repose:
We can but fail; and may prepare
The way for one like those.*

SONG AND STORY

I was destined, when a baby,
For that land which lieth hidden
In the moon; and whither, may be,
At their birth all souls are bidden.

She bewitched me then and bound me,
She a daughter of Apollo,
In a golden snare who wound me,
And compelled me thus to follow:—

Once she sent a stallion, sired
Of the Wind; a mare his mother,
Whom Thessalian madness fired,
And the Hurricane his brother.

And a voice said, “Do not tarry!
Mount him while the world is sleeping:
He, my beautiful, will carry
You, my Soul, into my keeping.”

SONG AND STORY

And I mounted : tempest whistled
In my ears, and, yawning o'er us,
Flamed the lightning ; boomed the missiled
Thunder, crashing far before us.

On we hurled. The world was rubble
Underneath us ; and the wonder
Of our passage seemed to double
Heaven's tempest and its thunder.

With us rode the air's wild races :
Wisps and witches ; all the Brocken,
Stunted, gnarled, with fiendish faces,
Seemed around us, gibing, mocking :

Hate, that shook the heart with hooting :
Humpbacked Horror ; gibbet-headed
Murder : and,— great ravens shooting
Over,— Fear, in bats embedded.

All were left ; were passed like water
Hurling headlong from a mountain,—
Hag and elf and demon's daughter,—
Ere we reached that mystic fountain.

There we stopped. I drained a beaker
Old as Earth : the draught was fire :

SONG AND STORY

On my soul the burning liquor
Acted like a new desire.

On again! The darkness lifted
Like an up-rolled banner. Scattered
Overhead, in points that shifted,
Shone the stars through tempest tattered.

Then the moon rose. Slowly, slowly,
Of a wild and copper color,
Rose the moon, in melancholy
Deep; and all the stars grew duller.

And we passed,—an instant's scanning,—
Swift as thought, the spider-arches
Of the ray-built bridges spanning
Space between her lunar marches.

So I reached her kingdom, olden
As the God that was its maker,
Where the rocks and trees are golden,
And the sea and air are nacre.

Where, 'mid ingot-glowing flowers,
Over streams of diamond brightness,
Palaces of pearl and towers,
Wrought of topaz, loom in whiteness.

SONG AND STORY

Here she met me with a chalice,
Like the Giamschid ruby burning;
And I entered in her palace,
From the world forever turning.

Centuries have passed, have vanished;
Still she holds me with her glory,
She, whom Earth long since hath banished?
She, the Soul of Song and Story.

AN INDIAN LEGEND

On a mountain by a fountain,
By a faintly falling stream,
Where upon the moss and flowers,
Sparkling, fell the spray in showers,
In the moonlight's mystic beam,
Once a maiden came to dream,
Came to sit and sigh and dream:
On a mountain by a fountain,
By a faintly falling stream.

To the fountain on the mountain
Rode a youth upon a steed;
In his hair an eagle's feather;
Round his waist a belt of leather,
Wampum-wrought with shell and bead;
In his hands a hollow reed,
In his hands a magic reed:
To the fountain on the mountain
Rode a youth upon a steed.

AN INDIAN LEGEND

On the mountain by the fountain,
When the moon shone overhead,
While the maiden by him wavered,
Low upon his reed he quavered,
Piped and played and singing said,—
“Listen and be comforted!
Heart of mine, be comforted!”
On the mountain by the fountain
When the moon shone overhead.

By the fountain on the mountain,
So the Indian legend saith,
Paler, paler grew the maiden,
Paler as if sorrow laden,
Frailer, paler at each breath,
Saying, “Art thou Love or Death?”
And he answered, “I am Death.”
By the fountain on the mountain
So the Indian legend saith.

Gone the mountain and the fountain
Where the maiden’s soul was lost:
But in every stream you hear it
Whispering, sighing, like a spirit,
Hear the Indian maiden’s ghost,
In the foam as white as frost,
Whiter than the winter’s frost:
Gone the mountain and the fountain
Where the maiden’s soul was lost.

JOHN DAVIS, BOUCANIER

High time, high time, good gentlemen, to sail
the Spanish Main!

Three months we 've watched for galleons and
treasure bound for Spain;

Three months! and not a vessel, neither barque
nor brigantine!

No Cartagena plate-ship, or De Dios, have we
seen.

Our sails are idle as the wind, our ships as gulls
or waves.—

'And shall inaction rot us like a gang of shackled
slaves?

Up, boucaniers! the land is wide, and wider far
the sea —

Somewhere between the dusk and dawn and
dusk some hope must be;

Some ship somewhere or city there beneath the
Indian sky —

What matter whether east or west! — some ship
with decks built high,

JOHN DAVIS, BOUCANIER

With treasure packed from stem to stern : some
 huge ship of the line,
Against whose ports we 'll cram our ports,
 while all our cannon shine
And thunder ; then, with blade to blade, and
 shouting horde on horde,
Swarm up her sides and sweep her decks with
 pistol and with sword ;
And, sink or swim, our flag flies there, we
 boucaniers aboard.

Say, what availed your patron saints, Iago and
 Saint Marc,
Lanceros, Adelantados, against Ravenau's
 barque ?
O butchers of good Jean Ribault, well might
 your cheeks turn pale
When Montebaro's brigantine shook to the wind
 her sail !
Around the coasts where New Spain boasts the
 haughtiness of Old,
Her tyranny, her bigotry, her sordid greed for
 gold,
From east to west, from north to south, among
 the Carib Isles,
Swift to revenge the Frenchman swept across
 the foaming miles.

JOHN DAVIS, BOUCANIER

The spirit of Pierre-le-Grand and of his gallant
crew,
Who took a galleon with a boat, beneath the
tropic blue,
Be with us now!— Up, gentlemen! and, Spain,
oh, woe to you!

Prime arquebus and brighten blade, and let the
culverin
Gleam, burnished as the morning-star, as
through the foam we spin;
And now be glad as when we had Granada in
our hold,
And stabbed the city's sentinels and took the
city's gold:
New Spain's good homes and churches, aye, will
not forget too soon
The boucanier, John Davis, sirs, who taught
their Dons a tune—
Dutch serenades of belts and blades they danced
to by the moon!

What helped the Latin of their monks to curse
what Satan blessed!
Those pieces,—broad,—of eight and plate we
counted in our chest.

JOHN DAVIS, BOUCANIER

And now that we may double or may treble
every piece,
Pipe up the anchor, boatswain! and, before the
hawser cease,
Let every sail salute the gale and every rope be
taunt —
The Devil take all care and us, if jaundiced col-
ors daunt!

The sea-gulls dip and dive and float, and swim
and soar again;
Be like them, merry gentlemen, high-hearted! —
May it rain
Rich galleons for us! — Mix a bowl and drink,
“The ships of Spain!”
Be merry as the sea-gulls are; and, as the case
may go,
Who cares a curse for wealth! — Now drink:
“Here ’s to Spain’s overthrow!” —
Doff caps and follow: though the prize be over-
fat or lean,
Kneel down now; give her praise who leads,
Dame Fortune, our good Queen!
Upon our prow she guides us now! — On to
Saint Augustine!

VOYAGERS

Where are they, that song and tale
Tell of, lands our childhood knew?
Sea-locked Fairy-lands that trail
Morning summits, wet with dew,
Crimson, o'er a crimson sail?

Where, in dreams, we entered on
Wonders eyes have never seen:
Whither often we have gone,
Sailing a dream-brigantine
On from voyaging dawn to dawn.

Leons seeking lands of song;
Fabled fountains pouring spray;
Where our anchors dropped among
Corals of some blooming bay,
With its swarthy native throng.

Shoulder axe and arquebus!—
We may find it, past yon range

VOYAGERS

Of sierras, vaporous,
Rich with gold and wild and strange,
That dim region lost to us.

Yet, behold, although our zeal
Darien summits may subdue,
Our Balboa eyes reveal
But a vaster sea come to ;
New endeavor for our keel.

Yet! — who sails with face set hard
Westward, while behind him lies
Unfaith ; where his dreams keep guard
Round it, in the sunset skies,
He may reach it — afterward.

HIEROGLYPHS

I

All dreams are older than the seas,
Being but newer forms of change;
Some savage dreamed mine; and 't was these
De Leon sought where seas were strange.

All thoughts are older than the Earth
Being of beauty ages wrought;
Old when creation gave them birth,
When Homer sang them, Shakespeare
thought.

II

If souls could travel as can thought,
Beyond the farthest arcs that span
Imagination, what would man
Not know and see at last?
One would explore the stars; and one
Would search the moon and one the sun
And tell us of their past.

HIEROGLYPHS

And one would seek out Hell; and, wise
In tortures of the damned, return
To tell us if they freeze or burn,
 And where God's red Hell lies:
And one would look on Heaven; and, mute
With memories of harp and lute,
 Sit silent as the skies.

But I — on condor wings would sweep
To some new world, and, soaring, sit
'Mid firmaments volcano-lit,
 And see creation heap
Its awful Andes, vague and vast,
About its Inca-peopled past,
 While deep roared out to deep.

III

Out of it all but this remains: —
I dreamed that I had crossed wide chains
Of Cordilleras, whose huge peaks
Lock in the wilds of Yucatan,
Chiapas and Honduras. Weeks —
And then a city that no man
Had even seen; so dim and old
No chronicle has ever told
The history of men who piled

HIEROGLYPHS

Its temples and huge teocallis
Among mimosa-blooming valleys;
Or how its altars were defiled
With human blood; whose idols there
With eyes of stone still stand and stare.

So old, the moon can only know
How old, since ancient forests grow
On mighty wall and pyramid.
Huge ceibas, whose trunks were scarred
With ages, and dense yuccas, hid
Fanes 'mid great cacti, scarlet-starred.
I looked upon its paven ways
And saw it in its kingliest days;
When, from its lordliest palace, one
A victim, walked with prince and priest,
Who turned brown faces toward the east
In worship of the rising sun:
At night a thousand temple spires,
Of gold, burnt everlasting fires.

Uxmal? Palenque? or Copan?
I know not. Only how no man
Had ever seen; and still my soul
Believes it vaster than the three.
Volcanic rock walled in the whole,
Lost in the woods as in some sea.

HIEROGLYPHS

I only read its hieroglyphs,
Perused its monster monoliths
Of death, gigantic heads; and read
The pictured codex of its fate,
The perished Toltec; while in hate
Mad monkeys cursed me, as if dead
Priests of its past had taken form
To guard their ruined fanes from harm.

IV

And then it was as if I talked
Of gods and beauty, like a god;
'Mid Montezuma's priests who walked
Obedient to my nod.

From Mexic levels breezes blew
O'er green magueys; cacaõ fields;
I stood among caciques, a crew
With plumes and golden shields.

In raiment made of humming-birds
Brown slave-girls danced. All Anahuac
Stood, grim with strange obsidian swords,
Around the idol's rock.

And up the temple's winding stair
Of pyramid we wound and went:

HIEROGLYPHS

The bloomed vanilla drenched the air
With all its tropic scent.

Volcanoes walled us in: and I
Walked, crowned with flaming cactus-flow-
ers,
Beneath the golden, Aztec sky,
Lord of the living hours.

When, lo! five priests, who led me to
A jasper stone of sacrifice! —
Then deep within my soul I knew
That prideful moment's price.

A sixth priest, robed in cochineal,
Received me at the altar's stone:
I saw the flint-blade, sharp as steel,
That in his high hand shone.

O God! to dream that they would bind —
With pomp and pageant of their love —
Me to the rock, and never blind
Mine eyes to that above!

I felt the flint hack through my breast,
And in my agony did raise
Wild eyes, a little while to rest
Upon their idol's face.

HIEROGLYPHS

Just God! the priest tore out my heart,
And held it, beating, to the sun —
Chanting — and from one burning part
Great drops dripped, one by one.

Torn out, I felt my heart still beat,
I felt it beat with pain divine;
For, bleeding at the idol's feet,
My heart was pressed to thine.

V

You were a maiden like a dream
Who led me where volcanic dust
Rained in a scoriac mountain stream,
Where, from Andean snows, was thrust
One crater belching stones and steam.

You were an Inca princess when
I was a cavalier of Spain,
Who frowned among Pizarro's men,
And saw the New World rent with pain.—
No grace of God could save me then.

And it was you who led me far
To gaze on caves of Inca gold:

HIEROGLYPHS

But when we came, lo! warrior
On warrior, an army rolled
Around us panoplied for war.

Fierce faces chiseled out of stone
Are not more stern.—Down, underneath,
I heard the sullen earthquake groan;
Above me, red eruptions seeth.
And clenched my teeth and stood alone.

And then you pled and was denied.—
They laid me where the lava crawled,
Red-rivered, down the mountain side.
I felt the slow, slow hell-heat scald:
And as it closed, you leapt and died.

VI

In farther planets there are men who talk,
Not with their lips, but with their eyes alone,
With beaming eyes and brows that burn with
thought:
Pure souls whose sentiments need but be born
To be expressed. Where speech of mouth and
tongue
Were barbarous discord. Where no voice im-
parts

HIEROGLYPHS

Thought, but divulging eye and sensitive brow.
Superior planets, far beyond our sphere,
And nearer God than ages shall combine
To lift our world up with its wrangling woes.
Worlds that are strange to sickness and dis-
ease

Of mind and body ; perfect mentally,—
Past what we name perfection here on Earth,—
And physically. Morally divine
As creeds have taught us God's high Heaven is.
Worlds where Love makes no playmate of vile
Lust ;

Where Hope makes no companion of Despair ;
Where Power can not trample with fierce feet ;
And, impotent, the iron hand of Might
Surrenders its red weapon unto Mind ;
Where Truth and Thought are wedded, in one
rule

Of far progression, whose white child is Love.

So have I dreamed, and longed to leave sad
Earth,

And live anew on some diviner sphere ;
A world so higher, lovelier than this,
So spiritually perfected and refined,
That, should an Earth-born mortal,— suddenly
Translated thither,— unprepared behold,

HIEROGLYPHS

Dazed with divinity, before the feet
Of its inhabitants he would fall prone
In worship and astonishment; and, all
The exaltation of celestial peace
Singing within, cry out: "Yea, this is Heaven!
How long, O sinner, hast thou dwelt in Hell!"

VII

An iron despotism the day's:
A brutal anarchy the night's:
What hope for hope when day betrays,
And night in death delights?

For, once I prayed for gulfs of gold,
And morn pooled heav'n with sombre blood:
For skies of stars, and skies behold—
Malignant with the scud.

And so I marvel not that he,
Gray-haired and toothless, hugs his stove,
While I my youth, which once was she,
Have buried with my love.

VIII

All thoughts of nature are but forms
Of life and death, with which began

HIEROGLYPHS

Love: love, that swept the heavens with
 storms,
Evolving worlds to perfect man.

Thoughts are the forms of mind; and come
And go, assuming every shape:
Science and art: through which we clomb,
And climb, to angel from the ape.

A LEGEND OF THE LILY

Pale as a star that shines through rain
Her face was seen at the window-pane,
Her sad, frail face that watched in vain.

The face of a girl whose brow was wan;
To whom the kind sun spoke at dawn,
And a star and the moon when the day was
gone.

And oft and often the sun had said —
“O fair, white face, O sweet, fair head,
Come talk to me of the love that 's dead.”

And she would sit in the sun a while,
Down in the garth by the old stone-dial,
Where never again would he make her smile.

And often the first bright star o'erhead
Had whispered, “Sweet, where the rose
blooms red,
Come look with me for the love that 's dead.”

A LEGEND OF THE LILY

And she would wait with the star she knew,
Where the fountain splashed and the roses
blew,
Where never again would he come to woo.

And oft the moon, when she lay in bed,
Had sighed, "Dear heart, in the orchardstead
Come dream with me of the love that 's dead."

And she would stand in the moon, the dim,
Where the fruit made heavy the apple limb,
Where never again would she dream with him.

So summer passed and the autumn came;
And the wind-torn boughs were touched with
flame;
But her life and her sorrow remained the same.

Or, if she changed, as it comes about
A life may change through trouble and
doubt,—
As a candle flickers and then goes out,—

'T was only to grow more quiet and wan,
Sadly waiting at dusk and at dawn
For the coming of love forever gone.

A LEGEND OF THE LILY

And so, one night, when the star looked in,
It kissed her face that was white and thin,
And murmured, "Come! thou free of sin!"

And when the moon, on another night,
Beheld her lying still and white,
It sighed, "'T is well! now all is right."

And when one morning the sun arose,
And they bore her bier down the garden-close,
It touched her, saying, "At last, repose."

And they laid her down, so young and fair,
Where the grass was withered, the bough was
bare,
All wrapped in the light of her golden hair.

So autumn passed and the winter went;
And spring, like a blue-eyed penitent,
Came, telling her beads of blossom and scent.

And, lo! to the grave of the beautiful
The strong sun cried, "Why art thou dull?
Awake! awake! Forget thy skull!"

And the evening-star and the moon above
Called out, "O dust, now speak thereof!
Proclaim thyself! Arise, O love!"

A LEGEND OF THE LILY

And the skull and the dust in the darkness
heard.

Each icy germ in its cerements stirred,
As Lazarus moved at the Lord's loud word.

And a flower arose on the mound of green,
White as the robe of the Nazarene;
To testify of the life unseen.

And I paused by the grave; then went my way:
And it seemed that I heard the lily say —
“Here was a miracle wrought to-day.”

THE END OF THE CENTURY

There are moments when, as missions,
God reveals to us strange visions;
When, within their separate stations,
 We may see the Centuries,
Like revolving constellations
 Shaping out Earth's destinies.

I have gazed in Time's abysses,
Where no smallest thing Earth misses
That was hers once. 'Mid her chattels,
 There the Past's gigantic ghost
Sits and dreams of thrones and battles
 In the night of ages lost.

Far before her eyes, unholy
Mist was spread; that darkly, slowly
Rolled aside,—like some huge curtain
 Hung above the land and sea;—
And beneath it, wild, uncertain,
 Rose the wraiths of memory.

THE END OF THE CENTURY

First I saw colossal spectres
Of dead cities: Troy — once Hector's
Pride; then Babylon and Tyre;
 Karnac, Carthage, and the gray
Walls of Thebes,— Apollo's lyre
 Built; — then Rome and Nineveh.

Empires followed: first, in seeming,
Old Chaldea lost in dreaming;
Egypt next, a bulk Memnonian
 Staring from her pyramids;
Then Assyria, Babylonian
 Night beneath her hell-lit lids.

Greece, in classic white, sidereal
Armored; Rome, in dark, imperial
Purple, crowned with blood and fire,
 Down the deeps barbaric strode;
Gaul and Britain stalking by her,
 Clad in skins, tattooed with woad.

All around them, rent and scattered,
Lay their gods with features battered,
Brute and human, stone and iron,
 Caked with gems and gnarled with gold;
Temples, that did once environ
 These, in wreck around them rolled.

THE END OF THE CENTURY

While I stood and gazed and waited,
Slowly night obliterated
All; and other phantoms drifted
 Out of darkness pale as stars;
Shapes that tyrant faces lifted,
 Sultans, kings, and emperors.

Man and steed in ponderous metal
Panoplied, they seemed to settle,
Condors gaunt of devastation,
 On the world: behind their march —
Desolation: Conflagration
 Loomed before them with her torch.

Helmets flamed like fearful flowers:
Chariots rose and moving towers:
Captains passed: each fierce commander
 With his gauntlet on his sword:
Agamemnon, Alexander,
 Cæsar, Alaric, horde on horde.

Huns and Vandals: wild invaders:
Goths and Arabs: stern Crusaders:
Each, like some terrific torrent,
 Rolled above a ruined world;
Till a cataract abhorrent
 Seemed the swarming spears uphurled.

THE END OF THE CENTURY

Banners and escutcheons, kindled
By the light of slaughter, dwindled —
Died in darkness: — the chimera
 Of the Past was laid at last.
But, behold, another era
 From her corpse rose, vague and vast.

Demogorgon of the Present!
Who in one hand raised a Crescent,
In the other, with submissive
 Fingers, lifted up a Cross;
Reverent and yet derisive
 Seemed she, robed in gold and dross.

In her skeptic eyes professions
Of great faith I saw; expressions,
Christian and humanitarian,
 Played around her cynic lip;
Still I knew her a barbarian
 By the sword upon her hip.

And she cherished strange idolons,
Pagan shadows — Plato's, Solon's —
From whose teachings she indentured
 Forms of law and sophistry;
Seeking aye for truth she ventured
 Just so far as these could see.

THE END OF THE CENTURY

When she vanished, I — uplifting
Eyes to where the dawn was rifting
Darkness,— lo! beheld a shadow
 Towering on Earth's utmost peaks;
Round whom morning's El Dorado
 Rivered gold in blinding streaks.

On her brow I saw the stigma
Still of death; and life's enigma
Filled her eyes: around her shimmered
 Folds of silence; and afar,
Faint above her forehead, glimmered
 Lone the light of one pale star.

Then a voice,— above or under
Earth,— against her seemed to thunder
Questions, wherein was repeated,
 “Christ or Cain?” and “Man or beast?”
And the Future, shadowy-sheeted,
 Turned and pointed towards the East.

THE ISLE OF VOICES

The wind blew free that morn that we,
 High-hearted, sailed away ;
Bound for that Island named the Blest,
Remote within the unknown West,
 Beyond the golden day.

There, we were told, each dream of old,
 Each deed and dream of youth,
Each myth of life's divinest prime,
And every romance, dear to time,
 Put on immortal truth.

The love undone ; the aim unwon ;
 The hope that turned despair ;
The thought unborn ; the dream that died ;
The unattained, unsatisfied,
 Should be accomplished there.

So we believed. And, undeceived,
 A little crew set sail ;
A little crew with hearts as stout
As any yet that faced a doubt
 And tore away its veil.

THE ISLE OF VOICES

And time went by ; and sea and sky
Had worn our masts and decks ;
When, lo ! one morn with canvas torn,
A phantom ship, we came forlorn
Into the Sea of Wrecks.

There, day and night, the mist lay white,
And pale stars shone at noon ;
The sea around was foam and fire,
And overhead hung, thin as wire,
A will-o'-wisp of moon.

And through the mist, all white and whist,
Gaunt ships, with sea-weed wound,
With rotting masts, upon whose spars
The corposants lit spectre stars,
Sailed by without a sound.

And all about,—now in, now out,—
Their ancient hulls, was shed
The worm-like glow of green decay,
That writhed and glimmered in the gray
Of canvas overhead.

And each that passed, in hull and mast,
Seemed that wild ship that flees
Before the tempest — seamen tell —

THE ISLE OF VOICES

Deep-cargoed with the curse of Hell,
Through roaring rain and seas.

'Ay! many a craft we left abaft
Upon that haunted sea;
But never a hulk that clewed a sail,
Or waved a hand, or answered hail,
And never a man saw we.

'At last we came where — pouring flame —
In darkness and in storm,
Vast a volcano westward reared
An awful summit, lava-seared,
Like some terrific arm.

And we could feel beneath our keel
The ocean throb and swell,
As if the Earthquake there uncoiled
Its monster bulk, or Titans toiled
At the red heart of Hell.

Like madmen now we turned our prow
North, towards an ocean weird
Of Northern Lights and icy blasts;
And for ten moons with reeling masts
And leaking hold we steered.

THE ISLE OF VOICES

Then black as blood through streaming scud
Land loomed above our boom,
An isle of iron gulfs and crags
And cataracts, like wind-tossed rags,
And caverns lost in gloom.

And burning white on every height,
And white in every cave,
A naked spirit, like a flame,
Now gleamed, now vanished; went and came
Above the windy wave.

No mortal thing of foot or wing
Made glad its steep or strand;
But voices, voices seemingly —
Vague voices of the sky and sea —
Peopled the demon land.

Yea, everywhere, in earth and air,
A lamentation wept;
That, gathering strength above, below,
Now like a mighty wind of woe,
Around the island swept.

And in that sound, it seemed, was bound
All life's despair of art;
The bitterness of joy that died;

THE ISLE OF VOICES

The anguish of faiths crucified;
And love that broke its heart.

The ghost it seemed of all we 'd dreamed,
Of all we had desired;
That — turned a curse, an empty cry —
With wailing words went trailing by
In hope's dead robes attired.

And could this be the land that we
Had sought for soon and late?
That Island of the Blest, the fair,
Where we had hoped to ease our care
And end the fight with fate.

O lie that lured! O pain endured!
O toil and tears and thirst!
Where we had looked for blessed ground
The Island of the Damned we found,
And in the end — were curst!

THE WATCHER

Young was the dream that held her when
The world was moon-white with the May:
She watched the singing fishermen
Sail out to sea at break of day:
Soft, as the morning heavens then,
The eyes that watched him sail away.

Old was her grief when summer filled
The world with warm maturity:
Far off she watched the nets that spilled
Their twinkling foison by the sea:
Where on the rocks she sat and stilled
With song his infant on her knee.

Who to her love would make them lies —
Those vows his sea-slain manhood swore?
Beneath the raining autumn skies
The fishing vessels put to shore:
She watches with remembering eyes
For the brown face that comes no more.

AT THE SIGN OF THE SKULL

*It's "Gallop and go!" and "Slow, now, slow!"
With every man in this life below—
But the things of the world are a fleeting show.*

The post-chaise Time that all must take
Is old with clay and dust;
Two horses strain its rusty brake
Named Pleasure and Disgust.

Our baggage totters on its roof,
Of Vanity and Care,
As Hope, the post-boy, spurs each hoof,
Or heavy-eyed Despair.

And now a comrade with us rides,
Love, haply, or Remorse;
And that dim traveler besides,
Gaunt Memory on a horse.

And be we king or be we kern
Who ride the roads of Sin,

AT THE SIGN OF THE SKULL

No matter how the roads may turn
They lead us to that Inn :

Unto that Inn within that land
Of silence and of gloom,
Whose ghastly Landlord takes our hand
And leads us to our room.

*It's "Gallop and go!" and "Slow, now, slow!"
With every man in this life below —
But the things of the world are a fleeting show.*

DUM VIVIMUS

I

Now with the marriage of the lip and beaker
Let Joy be born! and in the rosy shine,
The slanting starlight of the lifted liquor,
Let Care, the hag, go drown! No more
repine
At all life's ills! Come, bury them in wine!
Room for great guests! Yea, let us usher in
Philosophies of old Anacreon
And Omar, that, from dawn to glorious
dawn,
Shall lesson us in love and song and sin.

II

Some lives need less than others.— Who can
ever
Say truly “Thou art mine,” of Happiness?
Death comes to all. And one, to-day, is never
Sure of to-morrow, that may ban or bless;
And what 's beyond is but a shadowy guess.

DUM VIVIMUS

“ All, all is vanity,” the preacher sighs;
And in this world what has more right than
Wrong?

Come ! let us hush remembrance with a song,
And learn with folly to be glad and wise.

III

There was a poet of the East named Hâfiz,
Who sang of wine and beauty. Let us go
Praising them, too. And where good wine to
quaff is

And maids to kiss, doff life's gray garb of
woe;

For soon that tavern 's reached, that inn,
you know,

Where wine and love are not ; where, sans dis-
guise,

Each one must lie in his strait bed apart,
The thorn of sleep deep-driven in his heart,
And dust and darkness in his mouth and eyes.

FAILURE

There are some souls
Whose lot it is to set their hearts on goals
That adverse Fate controls.

While others win
With little labor through life's dust and din,
And lord-like enter in

Immortal gates;
And, of Success the high-born intimates,
Inherit Fame's estates. . . .

Why is 't the lot
Of merit oft to struggle and yet not
Attain? to toil — for what?

Simply to know
The disappointment, the despair, and woe
Of effort here below?

FAILURE

Ambitious still to reach
Those lofty peaks, which men, aspiring,
 preach,
For which their souls beseech:

Those heights that swell
Remote, removed, and unattainable,
Pinnacle on pinnacle:

Still yearning to attain
Their far repose, above life's stress and
 strain,
But all in vain, in vain! . . .

Why hath God put
Great longings in some souls and straight-
 way shut
All doors of their clay hut?

The clay accurst
That holds achievement back; from which,
 immersed,
The spirit may not burst.

Were it, at least;
Not better to have sat at Circe's feast,
If afterwards a beast?

FAILURE

Than aye to bleed,
To strain and strive, to toil in thought and
 deed,
And nevermore succeed?

THE CUP OF JOY

Let us mix a cup of Joy
That the wretched may employ,
Whom the Fates have made their toy.

Who have given brain and heart
To the thankless world of Art,
And from Fame have won no part.

Who have labored long at thought;
Starved and toiled and all for naught;
Sought and found not what they sought.

Let our goblet be the skull
Of a fool; made beautiful
With a gold nor base nor dull:

Gold of madcap fancies, once
It contained, that,—sage or dunce,—
Each can read whoever runs.

THE CUP OF JOY

First we pour the liquid light
Of our dreams in ; then the bright
Beauty that makes day of night.

Let this be the must wherefrom,
In due time, the mettlesome
Care-destroying drink shall come.

Folly next : with which mix in
Laughter of a child of sin,
And the red of mouth and chin.

These shall give the tang thereto,
Effervescence and rich hue
Which to all good wine are due.

Then into our cup we press
One wild kiss of wantonness,
And a glance that says not less.

Sparkles both that give a fine
Lustre to the drink divine,
Necessary to good wine.

Lastly in the goblet goes
Sweet a love-song, then a rose
Warmed upon *her* breast's repose.

THE CUP OF JOY

These bouquet our drink.— Now measure
With your arm the waist you treasure —
Lift the cup and drink to Pleasure.

LA JEUNESSE ET LA MORT

I

Unto her fragrant face and hair,—
As some wild-bee unto a rose,
That blooms in splendid beauty there
Within the South,— my longing goes :
My longing, that is overfain
To call her mine, but all in vain ;
Since jealous Death, as each one knows,
Is guardian of La belle Hélène ;
Of her whose face is very fair —
To my despair,
Ah, belle Hélène.

II

The sweetness of her face suggests
The sensuous scented Jacqueminots ;
Magnolia blooms her throat and breasts ;
Her hands, long lilies in repose :
Fair flowers all without a stain,

LA JEUNESSE ET LA MORT

That grow for Death to pluck again,
 Within that garden's radiant close.
The body of La belle Hélène;
The garden glad that she suggests,—
 That Death invests,
 Ah, belle Hélène.

III

God had been kinder to me,— when
 He dipped His hands in fires and snows
And made you like a flower to ken,
 A flower that in Earth's garden grows,—
Had He, for pleasure or for pain,
Instead of Death in that domain,
 Made Love the gardener to that rose,
Your loveliness, O belle Hélène!
God had been kinder to me then —
 Me of all men,
 Ah, belle Hélène.

LOVE AND LOSS

Loss molds our lives in many ways,
And fills our souls with guesses;
Upon our hearts sad hands it lays
Like some grave priest that blesses.

Far better than the love we win,
That earthly passions leaven,
Is love we lose, that knows no sin,
That points the path to Heaven.

Love, whose soft shadow brightens Earth,
Through whom our dreams are nearest;
And loss, through whom we see the worth
Of all that we held dearest.

Not joy it is, but misery
That chastens us, and sorrow;—
Perhaps to make us all that we
Expect beyond To-morrow.

Within that life where time and fate
Are not; that knows no seeming:
That world to which Death keeps the gate
Where Love and Loss sit dreaming.

THE END OF ALL

I

I do not love you now,
O narrow heart, that had no heights but pride!
You, whom mine fed; to whom yours still
denied
Food when mine hungered; and of which love
died —
I do not love you now.

II

I do not love you now,
O shallow soul, with depths but to deceive!
You, whom mine watered; to whom yours did
give
No drop to drink to help my love to live —
I do not love you now.

THE END OF ALL

III

I do not love you now !
But did I love you in the old, old way,
And knew you loved me —'though the words
 should slay
Me and your love forever, I would say,
“ I do not love you now !
 I do not love you now ! ”

A ROSE O' THE HILLS

The hills look down on wood and stream
On orchard-land and farm;
And o'er the hills the azure-gray
Of heaven bends the livelong day,
And all the winds blow warm.

On wood and stream the hills look down,
On farm and orchard-land;
And o'er the hills she came to me
Through wildrose-brake and blackberry,
The hill-winds hand in hand.

The hills look down on home and field,
On wood and winding stream;
And o'er the hills she came along,
Upon her lips a wildwood song,
And in her eyes a dream.

On home and field the hills look down,
On stream and hill-locked wood;

A ROSE O' THE HILLS

And breast-deep, with disordered hair,
Fair in the wildrose tangle there,
A sudden while she stood.

O hills, that look on rock and road,
On grove and harvest-field,
To whom God giveth rest and peace,
And slumber, that is kin to these,
And visions unrevealed!

O hills, that look on road and rock,
On field and fruited grove,
No more shall I find peace and rest
In you, since entered in my breast
God's sweet unrest of love!

THE WHITE VIGIL

I

Last night I dreamed I saw you lying dead,
And by your sheeted form stood all alone :
Frail as a flower you lay upon your bed,
And on your face, through the wide casement,
shone
The moonlight, pale as I, who kissed you there,
So young and fair, white violets in your hair.

Oh, sick with suffering was my soul ; and sad
To breaking was my heart that would not
break ;
And for my soul's great grief no tear I had,
No lamentation for my heart's deep ache ;
Yet what I bore seemed more than I could bear,
Beside you there, white violets in your hair.

A white rose, blooming at the window-bar,
And, glimmering in it, like a firefly caught

THE WHITE VIGIL

Upon the thorns, the light of one white star,
 Looked in on you, as if they felt and thought,
As did my heart,—“ How beautiful and fair
And young she lies, white violets in her hair ! ”

And so we looked upon you, white and still,
 The star, the rose, and I. The moon had past,
Like a pale traveler, behind the hill
 With all her sorrowful silver. And at last
Darkness and tears and you, who did not care,
Lying so still, white violets in your hair.

'A STUDY IN GRAY

A woman, fair to look upon,
Where waters whiten with the moon;
Around whom, glimmering o'er the lawn,
The white moths swoon.

A mouth of music; eyes of love;
And hands of blended snow and scent,
That touch the pearly shadow of
An instrument.

And low and sweet that song of sleep
After the song of love is hushed;
While all the longing, here, to weep,
Is held and crushed.

Then leafy silence, that is musk
With breath of the magnolia tree,
While dwindles, moth-white, through the
dusk
Her drapery.

A STUDY IN GRAY

Let me remember how a heart
Wrote its romance upon that night! —
God help my soul to read each part
Of it aright!

And like a dead leaf shut between
A book's dull chapters, stained and dark,
That page, with immemorial green,
Of life I mark.

II

It is not well for me to hear
That song's appealing melody:
The pain of loss comes all too near,
Through it, to me.

The loss of her whose love looks through
The mist death's hand hath hung between —
Within the shadow of the yew
Her grave is green.

Ah, dream that vanished long ago!
Oh, anguish of remembered tears!
And shadow of unlifted woe
Athwart the years!

A STUDY IN GRAY

That haunt the sad rooms of my days,
As keepsakes of unperished love,
Where pale the memory of her face
Hangs, framed above.

This olden song of love and sleep,
She used to sing, is now a spell
That opens doors within the deep
Of my heart's hell,

In music making visible
One soul-assertive memory,
That steals unto my side to tell
My loss to me.

AT VESPERS

High up in the organ-story
A girl stands, slim and fair ;
And touched with the casement's glory
Gleams out her radiant hair.

The young priest kneels at the altar,
Then lifts the Host above ;
And the psalm intoned from the psalter
Is pure with patient love.

A sweet bell chimes ; and a censer
Swings, gleaming, in the gloom ;
The candles glimmer and denser
Rolls up the pale perfume.

Then high in the organ choir
A voice of crystal soars,
Of patience and soul's desire,
That suffers and adores.

AT VESPERS

And out of the altar's dimness
An answering voice doth swell,
Of passion that cries from the grimness
And anguish of its own hell.

High up in the organ-story
One kneels with a girlish grace;
And, touched with the vesper glory,
Lifts her madonna face.

One stands at the cloudy altar,
A form bowed down and thin;
The text of the psalm in the psalter
He chants is sorrow and sin.

